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Sensex sees 4-month high with 862 points jump

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 17 OCTOBER 2025 | FRIDAY | BENGALURU | 24 RABI' II, 1447 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 283 | Pages: 8

No call, says MEA after Don claims Modi will stop buying Russian oil

Delhi says it's diversifying energy trade; Moscow flags national interest

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

India on Thursday said it is "broad-basing and diversifying" its sourcing of energy to meet market conditions, hours after US President Donald Trump claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured him that New Delhi will stop procuring Russian crude oil.

"We are broad-basing our energy sourcing and diversifying as appropriate to meet market conditions," said External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal. He clarified that India's import policies are guided by national interest and the objective of protecting Indian consumers in a volatile energy market.

Responding to Trump's assertion that Modi gave him assurances during a phone call on Wednesday, Jaiswal stated, "As per my information, there was no phone conversation between PM Modi and President Trump yesterday." He indicated the last call between the two leaders was on October 9.

In Washington, Trump told reporters, "He (Modi) assured me today they will not be buying oil from Russia... It's a little bit of a process, but the process is going to be over soon." He called Modi a "friend" and "great leader", adding that India's oil purchases help fund Russia's war in Ukraine, which he described as "ridiculous".

However, Indian officials said there is no plan to halt Russian energy imports, though a decline in volume has occurred. Jaiswal also emphasised that India has long sought to deepen energy ties with the US, and that discussions with the Trump administration are ongoing.

India remains a significant oil and gas importer, and Russian energy continues to be among the most cost-effective options. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak expressed confidence that cooperation with India would continue, while Ambassador Denis Alipov said ". Russian crude oil remains the most cost effective option on the global market and Russia's energy ties with India is in tune with New Delhi's national interests, he said.

Relations between New Delhi and Washington have come under strain after Trump imposed steep tariffs on Indian goods, including penalties related to Russian oil trade.

MEA FLAYS UK SANCTIONS ON REFINERY

India also criticised the UK's new sanctions on Nayara Energy's Vadinar refinery in Gujarat. "India does not subscribe to any unilateral sanctions," said Jaiswal, calling for an end to "double standards" in energy trade.

He stressed that energy security is a responsibility of the government, and companies source supplies globally, guided by market dynamics. *—PTI*

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US President Donald Trump says he 'loves' his 'friend' Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who promised to gradually phase out importing Russian oil **PHOTO: AI**

- Trump said, "(Modi) assured me today they will not be buying oil from Russia."

MEA hits back as Pak blames India for Afghan clash

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

India on Thursday said it is closely monitoring the escalating conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan, reaffirming its commitment to Afghanistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal strongly criticised Pakistan's stance, stating, "Pakistan hosts terrorist organisations, sponsors terror activities, and routinely blames its neighbours for internal failures. It is now infuriated by Afghanistan exercising sovereignty over its own territories."

His remarks came after Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif accused India of sponsoring the Afghan Taliban's recent actions and described the situation as a "proxy war" against Islamabad.

Casting doubt over a recently brokered 48-hour ceasefire between the two nations, Asif alleged Indian involvement despite India's long-standing zero-tolerance policy on terrorism. In a surprising comment, Asif also appealed to US President Donald Trump to intervene and help end the conflict. *—PTI*

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Lawyer to face contempt for throwing shoe at CJI

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

The Attorney General has consented to initiate contempt proceedings against advocate Rakesh Kishore, who threw a shoe at Chief Justice of India BR Gavai during court proceedings on 6 October. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and Supreme Court Bar Association chief Vikas Singh highlighted the issue, stating that social media reactions have gone "berserk," undermining institutional dignity. The bench remarked, "the fundamental right of speech and expression is not absolute and cannot be at the cost of the integrity and dignity of others." a week." *—PTI*

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Boy electrocuted near PM's rally venue in Andhra

KURNOOL, 16 OCT

A 15-year-old boy tragically died from electrocution on Thursday in the parking area designated for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public meeting in Kurnool district. According to a police official, the incident occurred when the boy, who was a resident of Munagalapadu village, was carrying an iron pipe intended for use as a flagpole. "The boy was trying to lift the pipe and it came in contact with the live wire and he was electrocuted instantly," stated Kurnool Town Deputy Superintendent of Police Babu Prasad. Following the incident, the police have registered a case to investigate the circumstances surrounding this event. *—PTI*

India saw 94% rise in POCSO cases from 2017-22

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

India has witnessed a 94 per cent rise in reported sexual offences against children under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, rising from 33,210 cases in 2017 to 64,469 in 2022, according to the Into the Light Index 2025 by the Childlight Global Child Safety Institute. Despite the increase, the country's prosecution rate remains above 90 per cent, reflecting stronger enforcement and reporting mechanisms. India also recorded 2.25 million reports of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) in 2024, maintaining the lowest CSAM availability rate in South Asia, highlighting effective detection systems. *—PTI*

RG Kar whistleblower joins BJP

KOLKATA, 16 OCT

Nearly a year after exposing multi-crore financial irregularities at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, whistleblower Dr Akhtar Ali has resigned from government service, alleging "vendetta" and repeated punitive transfers. Ali, who was Deputy Superintendent at Kaliaganj State General Hospital in Uttar Dinajpur, joined BJP on Monday, sparking speculation about a possible Assembly election candidature. "I was transferred thrice since the RG Kar rape and murder incident," he told The Indian Express. He gained prominence as the key petitioner in the case, which led to a CBI probe. *—Agencies*

K'taka moves to regulate RSS events in public

BENGALURU, 16 OCT

Karnataka Cabinet has decided to introduce new rules to regulate activities by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its affiliates in public spaces, government premises, and institutions. The move follows a letter from IT and BT Minister Priyank Kharge to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah urging a ban on RSS activities in public and government-aided spaces.

The upcoming rules will require prior government approval for any such activities. "You can't just walk on roads waving sticks or organise Patha Sanchalanas with mere intimation," said Priyank, adding that permission will depend on specific parameters set by the government.

The government also released a 2013 circular issued under the Jagadish Shettar-led BJP government, which had restricted school premises for educational use only. This circular, released by the Chief Minister's office, is seen as a counter to BJP criticism of the Congress-led initiative.

The new rules will consolidate past directives from the Home, Law, and Education departments and are expected to come into effect within a few days.

When asked whether this was in continuation of the order issued by the Jagadish Shettar-led BJP government, Pati said he has not seen that one, but said the new order will be a detailed one and "will be of its own kind".

When asked about religious premises, Patil clarified that temple grounds under the Religious Endowment Department are public property and will fall under the same regulations.

Priyank, son of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, had earlier alleged that RSS shakhas were spreading divisive slogans and instilling negative ideas among children in government schools and public grounds. He called these actions contrary to India's constitutional values. *—PTI*

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Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had said that the Karnataka government would study Tamil Nadu's model on the RSS **PHOTO: PTI**

Shots fired at Kapil Sharma's cafe in Canada

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Comedian Kapil Sharma's Kaps Cafe in Surrey, Canada, was targeted for a third time in four months late Wednesday, though no one was injured in the attack.

A video of the incident shows a man firing several rounds from a handgun while seated in a vehicle outside the café. At least six bullets were discharged, with ten striking a window. Gangsters Goldy Dhillon and Kuldeep Sidhu, reportedly linked to mob boss Lawrence Bishnoi, claimed responsibility on social media soon after, warning the public to stay away and threatening those who "speak against religion in Bollywood."

The café had previously been attacked on 10 July, when staff members were still inside, and again on 8 August. The first incident was claimed by Babbar Khalsa International, said to be over remarks made during a comedy show about Nihang Sikh traditions. *—PTI*

1 day left & no seat deal for INDIA yet

PATNA, 16 OCT

With just 24 hours left for nominations for the first phase of the Bihar Assembly polls, the Mahagathbandhan remains in a seat-sharing stalemate. Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge personally reached out to RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav on Thursday in a last-ditch effort to break the deadlock.

The impasse centres around the number of seats Congress will contest. Initially offered 52 seats by the RJD, Congress pushed for at least 60. The RJD has reportedly agreed to 61, but remains firm on retaining key constituencies like Kahalgaon, Narkatiyaganj, and Vasaliganj.

Despite the unresolved talks, Congress began announcing candidates via its Bihar unit's official X handle on Wednesday night, with state president Rajesh Ram named from Kutumba. Meanwhile, VIP chief Mukesh Sahani is demanding 24 seats but may receive only 15. Tejashwi has reportedly issued him an ultimatum. Sahani's exit from the alliance could trigger complications. *—PTI*

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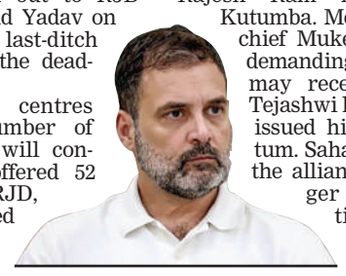


PRE-TEST FOR CENSUS FROM 10–30 NOV

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

The pre-test exercise for the first phase of the 2027 Population Census will be conducted in selected sample areas across all states and Union Territories from 10 to 30 November 2025, according to a notifi-cation issued by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, Mrityunjay Kumar Narayan.

An option for self-enumeration will be available from 1 to 7 November.

The pre-test aims to assess the readiness for India's first digital Census, which will be conducted in two phases between 1 April 2026 and 28 February 2027 . This will also include caste enumeration for the first time. *—PTI*

Pilot's dad moves SC for judicial prove into AI crash

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

The Supreme Court has been petitioned for a court-monitored inquiry into the Air India flight AI171 crash in Ahmedabad, which killed 260 people in June. The plea was filed by Pushkaraj Sabharwal, father of the deceased pilot Captain Sumeet Sabharwal, along with the Federation of Indian Pilots.

The petitioners are seeking a "fair, transparent and technically robust" investigation led by a former apex court judge with independent aviation experts. They allege the official probe by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Board (AAIB) and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation is "defective, biased and technically unsound." A key grievance concerns the AAIB's preliminary report, issued in July, which largely attributed the crash to pilot error. The plea argues the report unfairly focused on the crew, who cannot defend themselves, while overlooking potential systemic, electrical-failures in the aircraft. *—PTI*

'NOT FROM BACKWARD COMMUNITY'

Narayana Murthy, wife say no to caste survey

BENGALURU, 16 OCT

Infosys founder Narayana Murthy and his wife, philanthropist and author Sudha Murty, have formally declined to participate in Karnataka's ongoing social and educational survey, commonly referred to as the caste survey.

Sources from the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) confirmed that when government enumerators visited the couple's residence in Bengaluru, they explicitly refused, stating, "We don't want the survey conducted at our home."

Sudha Murty formalised their refusal by signing a self-declaration pro forma issued by the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission. The form allows citizens to opt out, citing personal reasons. In addition to the printed text, Sudha Murty reportedly added a handwritten note in Kannada: "We do not belong to any backward community. Hence, we will not participate in a government-conducted survey meant for such groups." The decision by one of India's most respected corporate families highlights the wider societal debate over the necessity, scope, and voluntary nature of the survey, which seeks to collect detailed social and economic statistics to guide future policymaking.

The survey, initially scheduled from 22 September to 7 October, was later extended to 18 October. Thousands of teachers have been deployed as enumerators, prompting the government to declare a school holiday until the revised completion date. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Fisherman dies after being pierced by flying fish

KARWAR, 16 OCT

In a tragic incident off the coast of Majali Dandebhaga, a 24-year-old fisherman, Akshay Majalikar, died after being struck by a flying needlefish during a fishing expedition. On Tuesday, 14 October, as he fished at sea, the fish, measuring 8 to 10 inches, leapt from the water and pierced his abdomen with its sharp snout, causing severe internal injuries, including damage to vital organs. Immediately rushed to KRIMS Hospital, Akshay underwent two days of treatment. Doctors stitched his wounds, and he was discharged when his condition appeared stable. However, after experiencing persistent pain, he was re-admitted but tragically succumbed to his injuries on Thursday morning. *—Salar News*

Staffer loots gold worth Rs 1.3 cr from Kolar shop

KOLAR, 16 OCT

Gold jewellery worth over Rs. 1.31 crores were looted in a dramatic fashion from a Kolar Gold Field shop by a staff who joined the shop only five days prior. The incident took place at PB Bohra Jewellers (PBB jewellers) situated at Robertsonpet area in KGF on Wednesday. According to police, shop owner Nithish Kumar said one Surendra from Rajasthan, a former employee, had recommended a man named Yash for the job. Yash was hired and stayed in the adjoining godown with two others. On Wednesday, when Kumar and other staffers were busy cleaning the shops ahead of Deepavali, Yash went to the washroom and never returned. CCTV footage showed him hiding the gold ornaments in his clothes before fleeing. *—Salar News*

Mysuru to host 'Mega Job Fair' today

BENGALURU/MYSURU, 16 OCT

Aiming to usher in an employment revolution in the State, the Department of Skill Development is organising job a "Mega Job Fair" in Mysuru on 17 October, as part of a larger State-wide initiative. The division-level job fair, to be held at the Maharaja College Grounds in Mysuru, has seen registration from 24,000 candidates and 221 participating companies. Around 45,000 job openings are expected. Details of candidates who do not secure employment at the fair will also be collected. Candidates can also register directly at the venue on the day of the event to participate in the job fair, Minister for Medical Education, Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood Dr. Sharanaprakash R Patil said. *—Salar News*

SWR Mysuru Railway collects Rs 6.26L penalty

MYSURU, 16 OCT

The Commercial Department of the Mysuru Division of South Western Railways achieved significant results during a special ticket-checking drive on Wednesday. Intensive checks were conducted across various sections to combat ticketless travel and other violations. A total of 727 infractions were identified, leading to a penalty collection of Rs 6,29,010. This included 534 cases of ticketless travel, amounting to Rs 5.66 lakh, 33 cases of irregular travel with penalties of Rs 37,640, and seven unbooked luggage cases totalling Rs 1,250. Other penalties included Rs 600 for smoking, Rs 1,000 for vending, and Rs 28,460 for miscellaneous violations. *—Salar News*

Bar govt staff from RSS events: Priyank

Govt reissues 2013 circular, which says school premises should only be used for school events

BENGALURU, 16 OCT

Minister Priyank Kharge has urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to strictly prohibit government employ-ees from participating in programmes organised by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and similar organisations, citing violations of service conduct rules.

In a letter dated 13 October, Kharge referred to the Karnataka Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, which state: "No government servant shall be a member of, or be otherwise associated with, any political party or any organisation which takes part in politics." He noted that despite existing guidelines, several gov-ernment employees have been seen attending RSS events.

Priyank, son of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, demanded disciplinary action against violators and urged issuance of strict directions barring participation in politically affiliated programmes.

He also reiterated his call to ban RSS activities in government and government-aided schools and public spaces, stating the organisation conducts shakhas where "slogans are shouted and negative ideas are instilled" in youth.

The Minister recently claimed he had received threats following his statements, though no police complaint has been lodged yet.

Meanwhile, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil confirmed the Home Department has been instructed to issue a Government Order to regulate access to government schools, colleges, and public grounds.

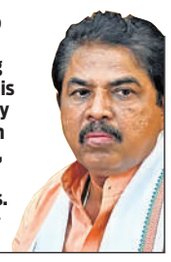
Patil clarified that any organisation must secure official permission before conducting events on public premises, and that the rules would apply universally, not targeting any group specifically.

Meanwhile, posting the 2013 circular on his social media handle, Priyank said, "Is the BJP unaware of its own government's decision? Or, doesn't this apply to the RSS."

"School premises must be used only for activities concerning the syllabus, extra-curricular programmes, sports, physical education and exercise of the school students. Therefore, it is hereby directed that per-mission should not be given for any reason to hold non-educational events on school premises and play-grounds," the circular issued back in 2013 had said.

Priyank further said, "even as the circular remains in force, the organisation named RSS is shamelessly treating schools as the property of Hedgewar's (RSS founder) family to conduct its activities." *—PTI*

> **Is CM Siddaramaiah staging a new drama to portray Priyank Kharge as the successor? Observing how Priyank is repeatedly writing letters to CM against the RSS.... it seems he is dreaming of overtaking Deputy CM DK Shivakumar. In any case, Shivakumar is causing concern to the Congress High Command by singing the Sangh anthem in the Assembly, participating in the Isha Foundation's Shivratri event, attending the Kumbh Mela, and reciting Sanskrit shlokas.**
> -R Ashoka, Opposition Leader



Man who threatened Priyank arrested

BENGALURU, 16 OCT

Bengaluru police have arrested a man from Maharashtra who allegedly threatened Minister Priyank Kharge after he urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to ban RSS activities in government institutions and public spaces.

The accused, identified as Dhanesh alias Danappa Narone from Solapur, was traced to Latur and arrested in a joint operation involving Bengaluru, Kalaburagi, and Maharashtra Police. Narone allegedly abused and issued death threats to the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister over the phone.

An FIR was registered at Sadashivanagar Police Station, and the accused has been brought to City for questioning. Police said Narone, who works as a marketing agent for confectionery firms, obtained Kharge's number through an online search engine.

Meanwhile, the KPCC has written a letter to the CM, DyCM and HM requesting that the State government constitutes an SIT to probe the death threats against Kharge.

The KPCC also asked for enhanced security for ministers, as there was a "serious threat to the lives of ministers who are engaged in ideological politics" and a review of all RSS activities. *—Salar News*

State approves 117km B'luru Business Corridor

BENGALURU, 16 OCT

The State Cabinet on Thursday approved the renaming of Peripheral Ring Road to 'Bengaluru Business Corrdior' (BBC).

Briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that the notifications had previously been issued for the 117-km PRR from Tumakuru to Electronic City but no decision was taken till now.

"Previous governments wanted to drop it. Now an alternative road is needed. We thought no road will be denotified," Shivakumar, who holds Bengaluru development portfolio, said.

He said that there were four compensation options to land owners.

The notification is for 100-metre road, but it will only be 65-metre wide. The remaining 35 metres will be given back to people who lost their land to carry out commercial activities.

"Thirty five per cent road will be given back to farmers as compensation. If someone wants for residential purpose then we will give 40 per cent," Shivakumar said.

The notification is for 100-metre wide road, but DK Shivakumar said that 35 meters would be given back to people who lost their land *PHOTO: AI*

There will also be provision for cash compensation up to 20 guntas of land (half an acre).

Shivakumar said those who want Floor Area Ratio (FAR) instead of land compensation, will provided the same so that they can utilise the area adjacent to the FAR land. Also, there will be provision to give compensation in the form of Transferrable Development Rights. "We are ready to give two times TDR or we will give alternative Bangalore Development Authority land," he said. "If someone does not want to take money then we will acquire the land and deposit the amount in the court."

The project cost is about Rs 27,000 crore for which the government may take a loan.

Following the new compensation policy, the project cost may reduce by Rs 10,000 crore, he said, adding the project may require 1,800 acres of land in the north City. *—PTI*

States bans Maharashtra seer from entering Vijayapura district

BELAGAVI, 16 OCT

The State government has prevented the Maharashtra based seer Adrushya Kadsiddheshwar Swamiji from entering Vijayapura district for two months following his controversial remarks against Lingayat seers and devotees.

District Commissioner Anand K issued an order prohibiting the Kolhapur-based Kaneri Kadasiddeshwar Mutt seer entry into Vijayapura district from 16 October to 16 December, based on a report submitted by the District Superintendent of Police. The report warned that the seer's visit could lead to disturbances in law and order.

The Swamiji was scheduled to visit Basavan Bagewadi in Vijayapura district on 16 and 17 October.

The controversy erupted after Kadsiddheshwar Swamiji's – who is from the Vokkalinga community - recent speech at Beelur village in Jath taluk, Maharashtra, where he allegedly criticised the "Chief Minister-favoured federation of Lingayat seers," calling it a "drama troupe." He further made disparaging remarks urging people to "stop visiting temples, throw home idols into rivers, drink liquor in hotels, eat meat and enjoy themselves."

Adrushya Kadsiddheshwar Swamiji *PHOTO: X*

The comments triggered outrage among Lingayat seers and Basava devotees, who protested, burned effigies, and demanded action against the Swamiji.

Officials clarified that the ban is temporary and preventive in nature.

Strong reactions also poured in from the Lingayat community in north Karnataka.

> **The Siddaramaiah government (has) a conspiratorial policy to divide Hindus and is adopting an authoritarian approach by labelling sadhus and saints as disturbers of peace.**
> -BY Vijayendra, State BJP President

Basavaraj Rotti, president of the Universal Lingayat Mahasabha (Belagavi district unit), said the Kaneri Mutt seer used "unconstitutional and derogatory" language against over 300 mathadishas who attended the recent Basava Sanskriti Abhiyan convention.

The organisation has announced plans to hold a rally in Belagavi on Friday, where a memorandum will be submitted to the Chief Minister through the district administration, urging the state government to impose a statewide entry ban on the Kaneri seer. *—Salar New*

CM, DyCM flag wastage on World Food Day

BENGALURU, 16 OCT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his Deputy DK Shivakumar flagged that there was a corpus amount of food and grains being waster in the State.

Speaking at an event marking World Food Day at Vidhana Soudha on Thursday, Siddaramaiah said, "In Bengaluru alone, 943 tons of food are wasted every year. According to a GKVK study report, we are wasting food worth approximately Rs 360 crore."

Noting that wasting food was a "sinful act", he said that the State government had launched the Anna Bhagya Scheme to benefit the weaker sections of society.

CM Siddaramaiah inaugurated the World Food Day celebrations at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Thursday with DyCM DK Shivakumar, Food and Civil Supply Minister KH Muniyappa and others *PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD*

"The Food Security Act was brought into effect by (late) prime minister Manmohan Singh," he said. "The BJP strongly opposed the Food Security Act. The BJP's ideology is against the poor, and this must be understood."

He noted that the government was modifying the Anna Bhagya scheme, which initially provided 10kgs of rice to beneficiaries to now include 5kgs of rice and 5kgs of oil, lentils, sugar, salt and other items to preventing hoarding and wastage. Both Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah vowed strict action against those who were found hoarding Anna Bhagya rice. "We have not taken this decision under any pressure from any quarter. This decision has been arrived at based on a survey and discussions with MLAs. On an average, a person uses 5-6 kgs of rice in a month," Shivakumar added. "SM Krishna introduced midday meal scheme. Siddaramaiah launched the Anna Bhagya scheme." *—Salar News*

'NEIGHBOURS BURNING,' NARA JAB AT DKS OVER ANDHRA GOOGLE HUB

AMARAVATI, 16 OCT

Andhra Pradesh IT Minister Nara Lokesh on Thursday took a sharp dig at State Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar amid their ongoing war of words over Google's announcement to invest USD 15 billion in a one-gigawatt Artificial Intelligence (AI) hub in Visakhapatnam.

"They say Andhra food is spicy. Seems some of our investments are too. Some neighbours are already feeling the burn," Lokesh posted on X, hinting at envy from Karnataka.

The Karnataka Opposition doubled down. JD(S) leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy said on X, "Andhra is cooking up investments, while Karnataka's ministers are busy cooking excuses. Andhra is attracting Google; Karnataka's ministers are threatening people who use it. No roads, no funds, no jobs, but just reels, real estate, and rhetoric!"

The Karnataka Congress responded that the State is "India's investment magnet" netting Rs 54,427 crore in Foreign Direct Investment in FY 2023-24. *—ANI*

'LEARN FROM INDORE, SURAT'

Kiran flays City's 'garbage menace'

BENGALURU, 16 OCT

Biocon Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw on Thursday once again highlighted the issue of garbage management in metropolitan cities, including Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru.

Mazumdar-Shaw alleged that the municipalities in big cities have failed to resolve the "serious malaise."

"Garbage is a serious malaise countrywide, and no municipality of big cities has managed to solve it. Indore and Surat seemed to have cracked it, but Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, etc, haven't," she wrote on X.

She attributed a lack of civic sense among citizens and apathy in the administration as the primary causes behind the garbage problem in cities.

"Very, very pathetic, which shows citizens' lack of civic sense n huge apathy by both citizens n administration. We lack pride," she said.

She was responding to journalist Sucheta Dalal's post holding the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation responsible for the garbage dumped at Bandra East in Mumbai.

Mazumdar-Shaw on Wednesday had said, "We are in this dire situation because of past govts' failure to act in time. This Government has the opportunity to change this."

"All I am seeking is garbage clearance and road resurfacing, which ought to be done by the (Greater Bengaluru Authority) GBA.... If the garbage mafia is not doing their job then we (should)," she wrote in another post.

State Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar had on Wednesday highlighted the efforts being made by the GBA. Similarly, GBA Chief Maheshwar Rao held a meeting with Civil Engineers on Wednesday to identify 100 critical issues to the road infrastructure. Mazumdar-Shaw on Thursday lauded the initiative.

Rs 123cr DEAL WITH GAIL

Shivakumar said that an agreement has been signed with Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) to generate gas from wet waste in City.

Speaking to reporters after signing of the agreement on Tuesday, he said, "GAIL is setting up a Rs 123-crore unit to generate gas from 500 tonne of wet waste".

"The State government has allotted the land already. This is the first of such initiatives in Bengaluru and we are ready to sign more agreements in this regard," Shivakumar said. "This would reduce the problem of waste in Bengaluru."Asked about Mazumdar-Shaw's comments, he said, "What are we doing with GAIL? We have done a lot for garbage disposal, but the Courts have put brakes on it. Now, we have given approval for tenders for waste collection and transportation in 33 packages and we are also setting up waste disposal units." *—Salar News with agencies*

Motorists struggle to navigate a massive pothole filled with at Malagala Main Road, near Dr Puneeth Rajkumar Outer Ring Road in Bengaluru *PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD*

Telangana Forest Minister Surekha's aide arrested

HYDERABAD, 16 OCT

A tense situation unfolded at the residence of Konda Surekha, the Telangana Forest and Endowments Minister, on the night of 15 October, as police attempted to take N Sumanth, her Officer on Special Duty (OSD), into custody following his recent termination amid allegations of misconduct. Task Force arrived after being informed of Sumanth's presence, but were confronted by Surekha's daughter, Konda Sushmitha, who questioned their actions and demanded a warrant. A video of the encounter spread rapidly on social media. Sushmitha later accused "Reddy leaders" of targeting their family, stating, "We came to know that Sumanth was removed ..." Sumanth's removal stems from claims of extortion. *—PTI*

Tipra Motha chief threatens exit over indigenous rights

GUWAHATI, 16 OCT

Tipra Motha Party supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma has threatened to withdraw his party from the BJP-led coalition in Tripura unless promised rights for the Tiprasa (indigenous) people are delivered. TMP holds 13 of the Assembly's 60 seats. Speaking at a party meeting in Karbook on Wednesday, Debbarma recalled an accord signed with the Centre and state in March, 2024 for Tiprasa development and urged immediate implementation. He insisted the TMP is a mission, not merely a party, and said it would not tolerate delays that other partners might accept. Invoking his royal lineage, Debbarma warned national parties they will lose indigenous votes if promises remain unfulfilled. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

AAP's Rajinder elected unopposed to RS from Punjab

CHANDIGARH, 16 OCT

Industrialist Rajinder Gupta has been elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha as a candidate for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) from Punjab. Gupta was the sole candidate on the ballot, following the deadline for nomi-nations and withdrawals. His election comes after the seat was vacated by Sanjeev Arora, who resigned to join the Punjab Assembly. AAP commands a strong majority in the Punjab Assembly with 93 of 117 seats. Gupta, founder of the Ludhiana-based Trident Group, is a first-generation entrepreneur and was awarded the Padma Shri in 2007 for his contributions to trade and industry. Currently, AAP has six representatives in the Rajya Sabha from Punjab. *—PTI*

Sabarimala gold plating: SIT grills Unnikrishnan Potty

T'PURAM, 16 OCT

The Special Investigation Team is interrogating Unnikrishnan Potty, the prime accused in the case of gold allegedly missing from the Sabarimala temple. Potty, a Bengaluru-based businessman, was taken into custody from his residence near Thiruvananthapuram. The SIT is investigating two cases, first, gold missing from the Dwarapalaka idols and second, the gold lost from the Sreekovil (sanctum sanctorum) door frames. Documents have been collected from the Travancore Devaswom Board and the Chennai-based firm that carried out the 2019 electroplating work. The team is recording statements from witnesses and accused persons. The probe follows a Kerala High Court directive with a strict deadline of six-week. Authorities are aiming to recover the missing gold. *—PTI*

JD(U) favours OBCs, names Muslims in list

OBCs, EBCs are a major chunk among the 101 candidates in 2nd list, 4 Muslims named

PATNA, 16 OCT

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal United (JDU) has fielded Muslim candidates in four seats for the upcoming Bihar assembly elections, balancing caste equations with community vote banks in the state.

JD(U) made public the names of candidates for all 101 seats it will be contesting in the assembly polls, with more than half of them from the backward and extremely backward classes.

The party released its second and final list a day after the first one, even as many of the candidates have been filing their nomination papers, upon receiving the ticket, since Tuesday.

The party also came out with a caste-wise break-up of the nominees, underscoring the fact that OBCs (37) and EBCs (22) form the bulk of the candidates.

The upper castes (22) also find a sizeable representation, though the share offered to Muslims has triggered speculations whether the JD(U) has now given up on the minority vote, given its long alliance with the BJP and inability to take an independent stance on sensitive issues like the Waqf.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar PHOTO: PTI

Almost all ministers in the Nitish Kumar government were given a second chance to retain their seats.

Prominent among them are Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, Bijendra Prasad Yadav, Zama Khan, Sheela Mandal, Leshi Singh and Sumit Kumar Singh.

Turncoat Vibha Devi will seek to retain Nawada, while Chetan Anand has been fielded from Nabinagar.

Sheohar, where local JD(U) MP Lovely Anand happens to be the mother of the sitting MLA, has been given to Shweta Gupta.

The decision may have been taken in view of the fact that Aurangabad district, of which Nabinagar is a part, is a Rajput stronghold, thereby known as 'Chittorgarh of Bihar', while Sheohar has a sizeable number of Vaishyas.

Alleged betrayers like don-turned-politician Anant Singh, who had quit the JD(U) a decade ago has been given the party ticket again from Mokama. *—PTI*

SIR 'accurate': EC tells SC, blames parties & NGOs

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

The Election Commission on Thursday termed the Bihar SIR "accurate" and told the Supreme Court that the petitioner political parties and NGOs are merely content with making "false allegations" to discredit the exercise.

The poll body also told the apex court that not a single appeal has been filed by any voter against name deletion since the publication of the final electoral roll.

It denied the allegation of the petitioners that there was a "disproportionate exclusion of Muslims" from the final electoral roll of the state prepared after the months-long Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise.

"This communal approach is to be deprecated," the poll panel said.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi, which noted the absence of political parties from the hearing due to rallies in the poll-bound state, said it expects the poll panel, as a responsible authority, to look into typographical errors and other

mistakes in the final list of Bihar electoral roll prepared after the SIR exercise and come out with remedial measures.

"Even after the determination of the objections and deletion of approximately 3.66 lakh individuals from the final electoral roll, no appeal has been reported as of now," the EC said, seeking dismissal of pleas challenging the 24 June decision of the poll panel to conduct the Bihar SIR.

"The approach of the political parties... has been to accuse the ECI," it said, adding that the petitioners made "false allegations" with "ulterior motives." *—PTI*

EC defends burqa-clad voters' verification

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

PHOTO: PTI

Amid demands by some opposition parties that the Election Commission withdraw its direction to verify identity of burqa-clad women at Bihar's polling stations, the EC on Thursday defended its move saying it is implementing a decision taken as back as 1994 when TN Seshan was heading the poll authority.

The Samajwadi Party has demanded withdrawal of EC's decision.

In 1994, the EC had issued the order while expressing anguish over low turnout of women voters due to customs and traditions. The EC has said that special arrangements are being made at polling stations in Bihar for "dignified" identification of women voters in burqa or purdah in the presence of lady polling officers while ensuring their privacy.

Anganwadi workers will be present at all polling booths in the state to help verify the identity of burqa-clad voters.

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath lambasted RJD-Congress combine in Bihar for opposing the EC order. *—PTI*

RLM ANNOUNCES 4 CANDIDATES AMID CRACKS IN NDA ALLIANCE

PATNA, 16 OCT

The Rashtriya Lok Morcha (RLM), an NDA ally in Bihar, has announced four candidates for the upcoming assembly elections.

Snehlata, wife of RLM Chief Upendra Kushwaha, will contest Sasaram, Madhav Anand from Madhubani, Prashant Kumar Pankaj from Ujiarpur, and Alok Kumar Singh from Dinara.

RLM and Hindustani Awami Morcha (HAM) are contesting six seats each, while BJP and JD(U) will field candidates for 101 seats each, and the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) for 29. The 243-member Bihar Assembly polls will be held in two phases on 6 and 11 November. *—PTI*

RLM Chief Upendra Kushwaha gives ticket to wife Snehlata PHOTO: X/RLM

TEJ PRATAP HOLDS ASSETS WORTH RS 2.88 CR, FACES 8 CASES

PATNA, 16 OCT

RJD President Lalu Prasad's elder son Tej Pratap Yadav, who filed his nomination papers from the Mahua assembly seat on Thursday as a Janshakti Janta Dal nominee, declared that he has movable and immovable assets worth Rs 2.88 crore, marginally up from the value of his properties disclosed five years ago. Yadav recently floated the political outfit Janshakti Janta Dal after being expelled from the RJD. Yadav he is facing eight pending cases but has not been convicted in any of these cases. The details of her estranged wife, Aishwarya Rai, were missing in his affidavit, as the divorce case is pending. *—PTI*

Modi inaugurates Rs 13,430 cr projects in Andhra Pradesh

KURNOOL, 16 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said that the 21st century belongs to 140 crore Indians and that the country will become "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India) by 2047.

Hailing the country's Make in India ecosystem, he said "we saw the might" of home made "things" in Operation Sindoor post the Pahalgam terror attack.

The PM further said Andhra Pradesh now has visionary leadership in Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and his deputy Pawan Kalyan and that there was full cooperation from the centre to the state.

He said with Google's AI Hub investment will come up to Visakhapatnam.

He said Andhra Pradesh is not only a land of self-respect and culture, but also the hub of science and innovation.

Several projects which were either inaugurated or laid foundation stone for will improve connectivity, support industries and better improve people' lives in the state.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and state Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan during the inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony of various development works, in Kurnool PHOTO: PTI

Modi alleged that when Congress was in power at the Centre then electricity consumption per person average was less than 1,000 units.

Earlier, PM Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation for multiple projects worth Rs 13,430 crore Spanning key sectors such as industry, power transmission, roads, railways, defence manufacturing, and petroleum and natural gas.

He laid the foundation for the Transmission System Strengthening at Kurnool-III Pooling Station at an investment of over Rs 2,880 crore.

Further, Modi laid the foundation for and inaugurated railway projects worth over Rs 1,200 crore.

He also offered prayers at the Sri Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna Swamy Varla Devasthanam at Srisailam in Nandyal district. *—PTI*

Modi scared of Trump, outsourced decisions to US: Cong

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

The Congress on Thursday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of being "frightened" of US President Donald Trump, alleging he has outsourced key decisions to Washington after Trump claimed Modi assured that India would not buy Russian oil.

Congress leader **Rahul Gandhi** said Modi allowed Trump to make the announcement and "keeps sending congratulatory messages despite repeated snubs." Trump had described the assurance as a step to increase pressure on Moscow over its Ukraine invasion.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh also criticised the government over the issue.

India is the second-largest buyer of Russian fossil fuels after China, according to the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). Traditionally reliant on

PHOTO: PTI

Middle Eastern oil, India, the world's third-largest oil importer, sharply increased purchases from Russia after its February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Western sanctions and lower European demand made Russian crude available at deep discounts, pushing India's imports from under 1 per cent to nearly 40 per cent of its total crude in a short span.

New Delhi maintains its oil imports are guided by energy security and affordability. Gandhi said India could resume energy trade with Moscow once the Russia-Ukraine war ends. *—PTI*

Build bridges, not barriers, says Lanka PM in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

"Always build bridges, not barriers, at home, office or between nations," Sri Lankan Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya said on Thursday during her India visit. Recalling India's support during Sri Lanka's economic crisis, she called it "the hand of a true friend in our darkest hours" and highlighted the civilisational and cultural ties binding the two nations.

Amarasuriya, on her first India visit since assuming office, addressed students at her alma mater, Hindu College, Delhi. She was welcomed by Principal Anju Srivastava and interacted with faculty, Sociology students, and members of the college parliament.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu CM M K Stalin urged the Centre to discuss the safety of fishermen and retrieval of Katchatheevu island with the Prime Minister, calling it the right time to resolve longstanding challenges in the Palk Bay fishing waters. *—PTI*

16 ministers quit ahead of Gujarat cabinet reshuffle

GANDHINAGAR, 16 OCT

In a significant political development, all 16 Gujarat ministers, excluding Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, resigned on Thursday ahead of a planned cabinet expansion, BJP sources said, adding that the resignations were formally accepted.

The enlargement is scheduled for 11.30am Friday, as earlier announced. Patel's current ministry has 17 members, eight at cabinet rank and the rest as Ministers of State. Gujarat's 182-member assembly allows up to 27 ministers. Earlier, MoS Jagdish Vishwakarma was named state BJP president, succeeding Union minister CR Paatil. Patel resumed as CM on 12 December 2022. *—PTI*

TUSSLE WITH CENTRE OVER J&K

Omar completes a year in office but no statehood yet

SRINAGAR, 16 OCT

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Thursday completed one year in office, but the restoration of the statehood, his key election promise, is still not within sight.

Abdullah was sworn in as the first chief minister of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir in 2024 after his party secured a landslide win in the Assembly elections.

Most promises of Abdullah's party, the National Conference, remain unfulfilled. The party promised to strive for the full implementation of the Autonomy Resolution passed by the J&K Assembly in 2000, and restore the status quo and statehood to pre- 5 August, 2019.

The party promised that it would redraw the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, and the Transaction of Business of the Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Rules, 2019.

CM Omar Abdullah was sworn in as the first chief minister of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir in 2024 PHOTO: PTI

However, the government only passed a resolution calling for restoration of J&K's statehood, and another resolution asking the Centre to work out a constitutional mechanism to restore its special status. The government faces criticism from the opposition parties as well as from within its own ranks for "doing nothing."

The ruling party, however, maintains that it has still made the lives of the masses easier, even with limited powers. *—PTI*

CM MK Stalin asserted that only MLAs have authority to propose amendments & that legislation is the Assembly's exclusive right PHOTO: PTI

TN Assembly junks Guv's opinions on university bill

CHENNAI, 16 OCT

The Tamil Nadu Assembly unanimously dismissed Governor RN Ravi's opinions regarding the Tamil Nadu Siddha Medical University Bill, 2025, on 16 October 2025.

Chief Minister MK Stalin asserted that only MLAs have the authority to propose amendments and that legislation is the Assembly's exclusive right. "When a Bill is debated in the Assembly, only the MLAs elected by the people have the authority to propose amendments," he stated.

Stalin argued that the Governor's request for his opinions to be noted during the Bill's introduction contradicted the Constitution. He also criticised the use of the term "appropriate consideration" in the Governor's message, suggesting it undermined the Assembly's dignity.

"Legislation is the exclusive right of this Assembly," he added. The Bill aims to establish a university for Siddha, Ayurveda, Unani, Yoga, Naturopathy, Sowa-Rigpa, and Homeopathy, with the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister as its chancellor. *—PTI*

SC junks T'gana's 42% OBC quota plea

HC had earlier stayed the govt order ahead of local polls; Next hearing after six weeks

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed the Telangana government's plea challenging a high court order which stayed a government order providing 42 per cent reservation to Backward Classes in local bodies.

The court dismissed the state's plea against the Telangana High Court order, issuing an interim stay against the government order.

The apex court said that the high court must decide the main matter on merits and not be influenced by the dismissal of the petition filed by the state government. It then listed the case for further hearing after six weeks.

SC issued an interim stay against the government order *PHOTO: PTI*

The high court, which was hearing a batch of petitions challenging the state government's order that increased the Backward Classes quota, had directed the state to file its reply in four weeks.

Some of the petitioners before the high court challenged the 26 September government order, saying the 42 per cent quota raises total reservation in local bodies to 67 per cent. It breaches the 50 per cent ceiling on reservations laid down by the court in its verdicts, they claimed.

The gram panchayat elections in the state will be held in three phases on 31 October 31, 4 and 8 November. The Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituency and ZP Territorial Constituency polls are scheduled 23 and 27 October.

The stay by the high court month after the state government passed the 2025 Telangana Municipalities Third Amendment Bill and the 2025 Telangana Panchayat Raj Third Amendment Act to lift the 50% ceiling on caste-based reservations in local bodies.

The Acts had been awaiting the governor's assent.

The state government moved the Supreme Court after the High Court issued a stay on the increase.

The top court also asked advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi why the increase in reservation was not brought in before the elections were notified. *—Agencies*

Execution of Kerala nurse in Yemen stayed, SC told

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

PHOTO: ANI

- The case has been adjourned until Jan, '26, though an earlier hearing may be requested. Negotiations over possible 'blood money', permitted under Sharia law, are being explored.

The Supreme Court was informed on Thursday that the execution of Indian nurse Nimisha Priya, who is on death row in Yemen, has been stayed.

Attorney General R Venkataramani, representing the Centre, told the bench that a new mediator had stepped in and assured that "nothing adverse is happening" in Priya's case.

Priya, 38, from Kerala, was convicted for the 2017 murder of her Yemeni business partner and has been imprisoned in Sana'a. Her final appeal against the death sentence was rejected in 2023.

The court was hearing a plea filed by the Save Nimisha Priya International Action Council, which has sought diplomatic intervention to secure her release. The council's counsel confirmed that the execution remains stayed.

The case has been adjourned until January, 2026, though an earlier hearing may be requested. Negotiations over possible 'blood money', permitted under Sharia law, are being explored. *–PTI*

TN to hold 3 TET exams to recruit teachers

CHENNAI, 16 OCT

Following the Supreme Court's directive making the Teachers' Eligibility Test (TET) mandatory for Classes 1 to 8 teachers, Tamil Nadu will hold three special TET exams in January, July, and December 2026.

A government order on 13 October, 2025, states the Teachers Recruitment Board will conduct the exams and release notifications, the first expected in late November. The January exams (Papers I and II) are scheduled for 24 and 25 January 2026.

All government and aided school teachers must pass TET within two years to retain posts and qualify for promotion, except those with less than five years to retirement.

Exam fees are Rs 600, and Rs 300 for SC, SCA, ST, and differently-abled candidates, payable online. - Agencies

UP firm employee 'flees' with Railways' Rs 70 L

JHANSI, 16 OCT

Jhansi police have launched a manhunt for a private company employee who allegedly absconded with nearly Rs 70 lakh belonging to the Railways. The accused, Anshul Sahu, worked for CMS Info Systems Limited, a Gwalior-based cash collection firm. He was responsible for depositing three days' railway earnings, totalling Rs 69,78,642, into the State Bank of India's railway station branch. According to a complaint by company manager Gaurav Garg, Sahu collected the money between 10 and 12 October but failed to deposit it. Police at Navabad station have registered a case and are working to trace and "swiftly arrest" Sahu. His employer handed over his identification documents to the police. *—PTI*

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

ED files fraud case against Elvish Yadav, Fazilpuriya

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a money laundering chargesheet against YouTuber Elvish Yadav, singer Fazilpuriya, and two others for allegedly using protected wildlife in their online content. The prosecution complaint, submitted to a special Gurugram court on 13 October, names Yadav, 28, and Fazilpuriya, 35, as key accused. According to the ED, the two used snakes and iguanas in music videos and vlogs to gain followers, views, and revenue. Yadav allegedly earned about Rs 84,000 from an "offending" 2023 video, while Fazilpuriya's song '32 BORE' also featured protected species. The case was registered after the agency took cognisance of two FIRs and a chargesheet filed under wildlife protection laws. *—PTI*

'Let matter die naturally': SC on CJI's shoe attack

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

The right to speech and expression cannot be exercised at the cost of others' dignity and integrity, the Supreme Court said on Thursday, warning about the dangers of 'unregulated' social media, calling incidents like the recent shoe-throw at Chief Justice B R Gavai 'money-spinning ventures.'

The Supreme Court on Wednesday wondered whether it must reopen the controversy surrounding the lawyer who hurled a shoe at the CJI, observing it was better to 'let the matter die its natural death.'

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi made the remarks when Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and SCBA chief Vikas Singh sought urgent listing of a contempt plea against 71-year-old advocate Rakesh Kishore, who hurled the shoe on October 6 during court proceedings.

PHOTO: PTI

Singh said social media had gone "berserk," demeaning institutional integrity, and sought a John Doe restraining order.

Mehta noted the Attorney General had consented for contempt action and warned that social media monetises such incidents.

The bench said freedom of speech is not absolute and noted that urgent listing would fuel further coverage. Justice Kant said, "The moment you take any action, it will become part-2 for them." Justice Bagchi praised the CJI for showing restraint, noting judicial time is precious.

Kishore's act led the Bar Council of India to suspend his license immediately. The incident drew widespread condemnation, including from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. *—PTI*

Worms detected in MP hospital's drugs

GWALIOR, 16 OCT

A government hospital in Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh is facing a complaint over worms allegedly found in a bottle of antibiotic medicine given to a child.

Following a complaint by a woman whose child was given the medicine, the entire stock of 306 bottles of Azithromycin antibiotic at the government hospital in Morar town of Gwalior district were sealed and samples were sent to a laboratory in Bhopal for testing.

According to health officials, the medicine was generic and manufactured by a MP-based company.

Drug inspector Anubhuti Sharma said that although the

bottle of medicine that the woman had brought was open, the matter was immediately investigated.

A preliminary inspection of some of the medicine bottles revealed no signs of insects, she said. Its sample will also be sent to the Central Drug Laboratory in Kolkata. 24 children from Chhindwara district have died due to suspected renal failure due to the Coldrif cough syrup. *—PTI*

Puja Khedkar's dad gets bail in abduction case

MUMBAI, 16 OCT

The Bombay High Court on Thursday granted anticipatory bail to Dilip Khedkar, father of former IAS probationer Puja Khedkar, accused of abducting a truck cleaner after a road rage incident in Navi Mumbai on 13 September. Justice NR Borkar ordered Khedkar to pay Rs 4 lakh to victim Prahlad Kumar within six weeks and Rs 1 lakh to the police welfare fund.

Khedkar, absconding since the incident, sought relief after a sessions court rejected his plea. Police said he and his driver, Praful Salunkhe, forced Kumar into their SUV after their vehicle was grazed by a cement mixer and detained him at Khedkar's Pune bungalow. *—PTI*

AT NAM MEET

India bats for 2-state pact on Palestine issue

KAMPALA, 16 OCT

India has reaffirmed its long-standing commitment to a negotiated two-state solution to the Palestine issue, calling it the "only viable path" to achieve lasting peace and prosperity in the Middle East.

Speaking at the meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Committee on Palestine in Uganda's capital Kampala on Wednesday, Minister of State (MoS) for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh said India remains steadfast in its support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty.

The MoS Vardhan Singh also highlighted India's consistent position since the escalation of the conflict in Gaza on October 7, 2023.

Underscoring India's signficantly important ties with Palestine, Singh recalled that the NAM Ministerial Committee on Palestine was

PHOTO: ANI

established in 1983 under India's Presidency during the NAM Summit in New Delhi.

New Delhi continues to extend development cooperation and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, he said.

India contributes USD 5 million annually to the core budget of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), with projects worth USD 40 million currently in the pipeline.

The MoS Vardhan Singh welcomed the recent agreement of United States President Donald Trump's Gaza peace plan. *—PTI*

Man chased, killed over inter-caste relationship in UP

BAREILLY, 16 OCT

A group of people chased and stabbed a 22-year-old man to death in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly for having a relationship with a girl from a different caste on a village road

Three people were arrested in connection with the incident, which took place in Rajau Parsapur village on 15 October.

The victim, Abhishek Yadav's love affair with the girl had led to tensions between the two families.

Yadav worked at a plywood workshop in the village, while his father Ramkishan, a retired Army personnel, was engaged in cattle-rearing.

Family members alleged that Yadav was attacked by several men from the same village following a dispute at the fair during the 'Ravan Dahan' event.

Yadav had been jailed last year after the girl's family accused him of harassment.

Yadav was rushed to the district hospital, where he was declared dead.

A case was registered and investigations were underway. *—PTI*

Kerala school to oppose Hijab controversy report in HC

KOCHI, 16 OCT

The St Rita's Public School management in Palluruthy plans to challenge a Deputy Director of Education (DDE) report alleging it forced a student to leave due to her hijab.

PTA president Joshi Kaithavalappil stated, "The report was prepared without properly hearing the school management or PTA."

The DDE claimed the school violated the student's right to education, a charge the school

PHOTO: PTI

denies, asserting the student never faced denial of class attendance. Meanwhile, the student is reportedly unwell and under stress from the incident.

Minister V Sivankutty later urged the school management to refrain from criticising the government, claiming, "They tried to politicise the matter."

He asserted that schools must remain centres of peace and knowledge, warning against provocative statements, and stressed that the government would intervene if rules were breached. The controversy has drawn significant attention amidst ongoing mid-term examinations. *—PTI*

Cracker misuse could harm animals

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

As Delhi gears up to celebrate Diwali with the introduction of green crackers, animal activists and veterinarians express concerns over a potential rise in animal cruelty and injuries.

Activists fear the government's decision to permit 'eco-friendly' firecrackers may lead to increased misuse and distress among animals.

Manta Sidhu from 'People for Animals' stated, "Implementation has always been a huge problem," pointing to prior instances when a blanket ban saw rampant violations. Veterinarian Dr Meenakshi noted that dog bite cases often double during Diwali, warning this year might be worse as people resume bursting crackers.

The threat extends beyond pets; Amit Jain from the Vidya Sagar Jeev Daya Parivar NGO highlighted disturbing incidents of animals consuming discarded firecrackers. Despite being less polluting, the noise from green crackers can still traumatise animals. Experts remind that Diwali should be a celebration of kindness, not fear. *—PTI*

Shilpa Shetty withdraws plea on foreign tour in HC

MUMBAI, 16 OCT

Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty has withdrawn her plea in the Bombay High Court seeking permission to travel abroad, citing that her plans did not materialise. Her lawyer, Niranjan Mundargi, informed the court that Shetty would file a new application when she and her husband, Raj Kundra, are ready to travel again. The couple is embroiled in a Rs 60 crore cheating case filed by Deepak Kothari, who alleges that from 2015 to 2023, they induced him to invest in their company, Best Deal TV Pvt Ltd, only to misuse the funds. They had previously sought to suspend a Look Out Circular against them but faced restrictions on leisure travel. *—PTI*

Southwest monsoon departs from country

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

The southwest monsoon withdrew from the entire country on Thursday, a day later than usual, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. Simultaneously, the northeast monsoon has set in over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema, south interior Karnataka and Kerala-Mahe.Heavy rain lashed parts of Kerala, prompting an 'orange alert' in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Pathanamthitta districts, with thunderstorms and wind gusts of up to 50kmph forecast. India recorded 937.2 mm of rainfall this monsoon season, 8 per cent above normal, though the east and northeast regions saw a 20 per cent deficit. Northwest and central India experienced excess rainfall, leading to flooding in Punjab and landslides in the Himalayan states of the country *—PTI*

UP MOST AFFECTED

Wildfires hit 1.5 crore people in India: Study

PHOTO: AI

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Around 15 million people in India were affected by wildfires in 2024-25, with Uttar Pradesh the hardest hit, a global study estimates.

Over 4.6 million people in Uttar Pradesh and more than 3.5 million in Punjab were exposed. These fires were driven by crop burning, heatwaves, and dry fuel accumulation.

Regional fires caused severe haze in New Delhi in November 2024, with PM2.5 levels reaching 13 times the WHO daily standard, according to the State of Wildfires report in Earth System Science Data.

At the global level, 15 million people in the Democratic Republic of Congo and five million each in Nigeria, China, Mozambique, and South Sudan were affected.

Researchers warned that worsening heatwaves and droughts are making extreme wildfires more frequent and intense, threatening lives, property, economies, and the environment.

In 2024-25, wildfires burned 3.7 million sq km worldwide, releasing over eight billion tonnes of CO_2, driven by unusually large forest fires in South America and Canada exacerbated by human-induced climate change.

Globally, 100 million people and USD 215 billion worth of homes and infrastructure were exposed to wildfires. Middle- and high-income countries saw the highest infrastructure at risk, with India topping the list at USD 44 billion. *—PTI*

Real life 'Rancho' helps deliver baby at rly station

MUMBAI, 16 OCT

A heartwarming incident occurred at Mumbai's Ram Mandir railway station on Tuesday, when Vikas Bendre aided a woman in labour, successfully delivering her baby on the platform.

The incident unfolded around 1am, after the woman's family was refused assistance from a nearby hospital and resorted to boarding a train.

"The woman's baby was halfway out," recounted eyewitness Manjeet Dhillon, who shared a video of the incident on Instagram.

"It felt like God had sent this brother there for a reason."

Amid delays in emergency services, Vikas connected with a female doctor via video call, who guided him through the delivery process.

Netizens have hailed him as a "real-life hero," with many drawing parallels to Aamir Khan's character 'Rancho' from the Bollywood film '3 Idiots'. *—Agencies*

THOUSANDS HONOUR ODINGA

Thousands of Kenyans turned out to receive the body of former prime minister Raila Odinga at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, Kenya, a day after he died in India. The politician, who was lauded for his fight for democracy, died Wednesday after he collapsed during a morning walk, and efforts to resuscitate him at a hospital in Kerala failed. Odinga's body arrived in a chartered airplane and was given a water salute at the airport ahead of a planned public viewing in the country's parliament

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

World heading to add 57 superhot days a year

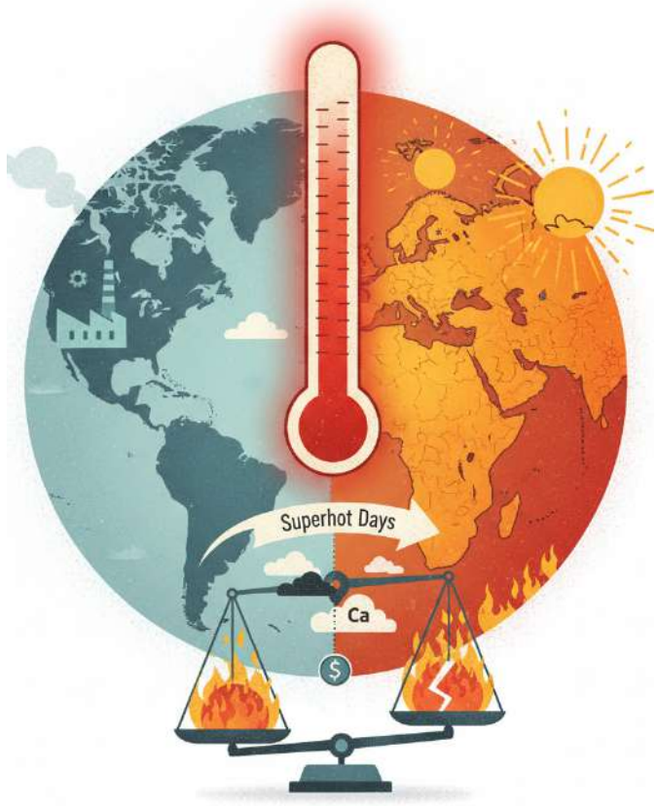
The world is on track to add nearly two months of dangerous superhot days each year by the end of the century, with poorer small nations hit far more often than the biggest carbon-polluting countries, a study released Thursday found.

But efforts to curb emissions of heat-trapping gases that started 10 years ago with the Paris climate agreement have had a significant effect. Without them Earth would be heading to an additional 114 days a year of those deadly extra hot days, the same study found.

The international collection of climate scientists World Weather Attribution and the US-based Climate Central teamed up to use computer simulations to calculate just how much of a difference the landmark accord has made in terms of one of the biggest climate effects on people: heat waves.

The report — which is not yet peer-reviewed but uses established techniques for climate attribution — calculated how many superhot days the world and more than 200 countries got in 2015, how many Earth gets now and what's projected in two future scenarios.

One scenario is if countries fulfill their promises to curb emissions and by the year 2100 the world warms 2.6 degrees Celsius (°C) above preindustrial times. That adds 57 superhot days to what Earth gets now, according to the study. The other scenario is the 4°C of warming that the world had been on track to hit before the Paris agreement. The study found that would double the number of additional hot days.



PARIS AGREEMENT COULD HELP INDIA REDUCE 30 HOT DAYS: STUDY

India could experience 30 fewer extremely hot days each year, while the world on average could avoid 57 such days if countries meet their emission-cutting pledges under the 2015 Paris Agreement and limit global warming to 2.6°C this century, according to a new study published on Thursday.

The analysis by Climate Central and World Weather Attribution said the global accord, which completes 10 years this year, is steering the world toward a safer climate but warned that the current pace of action is not enough.

India could experience 30 fewer hot days a year, while Kenya could see 82 fewer, Mexico 77, Brazil 69, Egypt 36 and the US and the UK 30 and 29 respectively, the researchers said. —*PTI*

PAIN AND SUFFERING COMING

"There will be pain and suffering because of climate change," said Climate Central Vice President for Science Kristina Dahl, a report co-author. "But if you look at this difference between 4 degrees C of warming and 2.6 degrees C of warming, that reflects the last 10 years and the ambitions that people have put forth. And to me, that's encouraging."

The study defines superhot days for each location as days that are warmer than 90 per cent of the comparable dates between 1991 and 2020. Since 2015, the world has already added 11 superhot days on average, the report said.

"That heat sends people to the emergency room. Heat kills people," Dahl said.

The report doesn't say how many people will be affected by the additional dangerously hot days, but co-author Friederike Otto of Imperial College London said that "it will definitely be tens of thousands or millions, not less."

IMAGINE RECENT HEAT WAVES BUT WORSE

Thursday's study calculated that the weeklong southern Europe heat wave in 2023 is now 70 per cent more likely and 0.6°C warmer than it would have been 10 years ago when the Paris agreement was signed. And if the world's climate-fighting efforts don't increase, a similar heat wave at the end of the century could be 3°C hotter, the report estimated.

A heat wave similar to last year's Southwestern United States and Mexico heat wave could be 1.7°Celsius hotter by the end of the century under the current carbon pollution trajectory, the report said.

COUNTRY DATA SHOWS HIGH HEAT INEQUALITY

The 10 countries that will see the biggest increases in those dangerous heat days are nearly all small and dependent on the ocean, including the Solomon Islands, Samoa, Panama and Indonesia. Panama, for example, can expect 149 extra superhot days.

Altogether the top 10 of those countries produced only 1 per cent of the heat-trapping gases now in the air but will get nearly 13 per cent of the additional superhot days.

But top carbon polluting countries, the United States, China and India are predicted to get only between 23 and 30 extra superhot days. They are responsible for 42 per cent of the carbon dioxide in the air, but are getting less than 1 per cent of the additional superhot days. —*PTI*

SALAR

What's driving the gold surge, and will it last?

The price of gold surged above USD 4,100 an ounce on Wednesday for the first time, taking this year's extraordinary rally to more than 50 per cent.

The speed of the upswing has been much faster than analysts had predicted and brings the total gains to nearly 100 per cent since the current run started in early 2024.

The soaring price of gold has captured investors' hearts and wallets and resulted in long lines of people forming outside gold dealers in Sydney to get their hands on the precious metal.

PHOTO: PIXABAY

WHAT EXPLAINS THE SOARING PRICE?

A number of reasons have been suggested to explain the current record run for gold.

These include greater economic uncertainties from ballooning government debt levels and the current US government shutdown.

There are also growing worries about the independence of the US Federal Reserve. If political interference pushes down US interest rates, that could see a resurgence in inflation. Gold is traditionally seen as a hedge against inflation.

But these factors are unlikely to be the main reasons behind the meteoric rise in gold prices.

For starters, the price of gold has been on a sustained upward trajectory for the past few years. That's well before any of those factors emerged as an issue.

The more likely explanation for the current gold price rally is growing demand from gold exchange-traded funds (ETFs).

These funds track the movements of gold, or other assets such as stocks or bonds, and are traded on the stock exchange. This makes assets such as commodities much more accessible to investors.

Before the first gold ETF was launched in 2003, it was considered too difficult for regular investors to get gold exposure.

Now gold ETFs are widely available, gold can be traded like any other financial asset.

This appears to be changing investors' view of gold's traditional role as a safe-haven asset in times of political or financial turmoil, when other assets such as stocks are more risky.

According to the International Monetary Fund, central bank holdings of physical gold in emerging markets have risen 161 per cent since 2006 to be around 10,300 tonnes.

To put this into perspective, emerging market gold holdings grew by only 50 per cent over the 50 years to 2005.

Research suggests the reason for the switch into gold by emerging market economies is the increasing use of financial sanctions by the US and other governments that represent the major reserve currencies (the US dollar, euro, Japanese yen, and British pound).

Indeed, Russia became a net buyer of gold in 2006 and accelerated its gold purchases following its annexation of Crimea in 2014. It now has one of the largest stockpiles in the world.

Meanwhile, China has been selling down its holdings of US government bonds and switching to buying gold in a process referred to as "de-dollarisation". It wants to reduce its dependency on the US currency.

Further de-dollarisation efforts by emerging market economies are expected to continue. Many of these economies now view the major Western currencies as carrying unwanted risk of financial sanctions. This is not the case with gold. This could mean financial sanctions become a less effective policy tool in the future.

COULD GOLD HAVE FURTHER TO RUN?

Ongoing demand from Russia and China, and investor demand for gold ETFs, means the gold price could rally further.

Both factors represent sustained increases in demand, in addition to existing demand for jewellery and electronics.

Further price rises will likely fuel increased ETF inflows via the "fear of missing out" effect.

The World Gold Council last week reported record monthly inflows in September.

For the September quarter as a whole, ETF inflows topped USD 26 billion and for the nine months to September, fund inflows totalled USD 64 billion.

In contrast, emerging market central bank demand for gold is less affected by price and more driven by geopolitical factors, which supports increasing demand for gold.

Based on these two drivers, analysts at Goldman Sachs have already revised up their price target for gold to USD 4,900 an ounce by the end of the 2026.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR AUS?

As the world's third-largest producer of gold, with at least 19% of known deposits, Australia will benefit from further increases in gold prices.

In fact, the Department of Industry, Science and Resources now expects the value of gold exports to overtake liquefied natural gas exports next year.

This will see gold become our second-most important export behind that other "precious" metal: iron ore. —*PTI*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Firecrackers don't just light up the sky, they inflame lungs: Experts

Even as Supreme Court has allowed the limited use of "green" firecrackers, with Delhi's pollution levels beginning to rise ahead of the festival season, medical experts are calling for awareness and caution.

"Every year, after Diwali, hospitals see a surge in patients struggling to breathe," they warn.

Firecrackers release toxic gases and ultra-fine particles that penetrate deep into the lungs, triggering asthma attacks, bronchitis, pneumonia and other serious respiratory issues even in healthy individuals, said Dr. Vikas Maurya, Senior Director and Head of Department of Respiratory Medicine and Critical Care Unit at Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh.

He advised people -- especially children, older adults and those with existing respiratory or cardiac conditions -- to avoid outdoor exposure during high-pollution days.

"Wear an N95 mask if you must go out. Keep windows shut, and use air purifiers. Those with asthma or COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) must not skip their medication. They should consult their doctors if symptoms worsen," he added.

The Supreme Court on Wednesday permitted the sale and bursting of green firecrackers in Delhi-NCR during Diwali, but only under specific conditions: the use of these crackers will be restricted to designated hours -- 6am to 7am and 8pm to 10pm -- on the day before Diwali and on the festival day.

The apex court first imposed a ban on firecrackers in Delhi-NCR in 2014-15 due to rising pollution levels.

Doctor Ankita Gupta, Associate Professor at Department of Respiratory Medicine, GTB Hospital, explained that burning firecrackers releases a cocktail of toxic gases and ultra-fine particulate matter, which severely degrades air quality and significantly contributes to hazardous atmospheric conditions.

She emphasised that the fine particles, known as PM2.5, can penetrate deep into the lungs, inflaming airways and reducing lung capacity. Firecracker smoke also adds heavy metals and sulphur compounds to an atmosphere already burdened by vehicular emissions and stubble-burning residue.

Gupta said the health consequences can range from mild throat irritation and cough to acute asthma attacks, cardiovascular stress, and long-term respiratory decline.

Vulnerable populations -- including infants, children, pregnant women, older adults, and individuals with asthma, COPD, or heart disease -- face the worst impact.

A vendor sells green firecrackers ahead of the 'Diwali' festival, near Jama Masjid in New Delhi ***PHOTO: PTI***

Dr. Anil Mehta, a senior physician known for his preventive health focus, also emphasised the importance of hydration during pollution peaks.

"In high-pollution seasons like this, staying hydrated is not just about drinking water -- it is about protecting your lungs, skin and immunity," he said. "Toxic air dries out the airways, increases inflammation, and weakens the body's natural defences. Water is the body's first way to detox," Mehta said.

Meanwhile, Dr. Ujjawal Parakh, Senior Consultant in Chest Medicine at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, reiterated the serious risks posed by firecrackers and smog in Delhi.

He pointed out that the capital's air quality is already compromised by a mix of vehicular emissions, construction dust, and stubble burning from neighbouring states. The additional load from firecrackers during Diwali, even if labelled as "green", can tip the scales and push the Air Quality Index (AQI) into the 'severe' category for several days, he said.

Environmental activist Bhavreen Kandhari echoed this concern, stating that calling firecrackers "green" does not make the air any less grey.

She warned that once the winter boundary layer drops and pollutants become trapped close to the ground, even limited cracker use can lead to several days of hazardous air quality.

- Vulnerable populations -- including infants, children, pregnant women, older adults, and individuals with asthma, COPD, or heart disease -- face the worst impact.

Doctors across the city advise the public to remain cautious during this high-risk period. Children, older adults, and individuals with health vulnerabilities should minimise outdoor activities, particularly during mornings and evenings when pollution tends to spike, they say.

Maintaining good health habits, such as staying hydrated, eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, and avoiding known respiratory triggers, can strengthen the immune system and increase resilience against pollution-related illnesses.

Those already on medication for respiratory or cardiac conditions must be especially vigilant.

Experts recommend continuing prescribed treatments without interruption and consulting physicians immediately if symptoms worsen. Preventive care, including the use of inhalers, nebulisers, or saline sprays, can help ease breathing and protect lung function during this critical time, they say. —*PTI*

4 soldiers die as bomb explodes on Syrian Defence bus

DAMASCUS, 16 OCT

A bomb exploded Thursday on a Syrian Defence Ministry bus in the country's east, killing and wounding several soldiers, state TV reported. State-run Al-Ikhbariah TV said the explosion occurred on the road linking the eastern cities of Deir el-Zour and Mayadeen. The report said the soldiers' job was guarding an oil facility in the oil-rich region that borders Iraq. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said four soldiers were killed and nine were wounded in the attack. No one claimed responsibility for the attack, but the area is known to be home to sleeper cells of the Islamic State group that was defeated in Syria in 2019. *—PTI*

Ukrainian officials meet US arms manufacturers

KYIV, 16 OCT

A Ukrainian delegation, led by Presidential Chief Andrii Yermak and PM Yuliia Svyrydenko, met US arms manufacturers Lockheed Martin and Raytheon ahead of President Zelenskyy's White House visit, a senior Kyiv official said Wednesday. Yermak did not disclose details but said cooperation with the companies continues to grow as Ukraine seeks cruise missiles, air-defence systems, and joint drone production. Raytheon makes Patriots and Tomahawks, while Lockheed Martin produces other advanced weapons Kyiv hopes to acquire. Meanwhile, Ukraine and Russia continued striking each other's energy assets, including a Ukrainian attack on a Feodosia oil terminal in Russian-occupied Crimea, damaging 16 fuel reservoirs, and Russian strikes causing blackouts in two Ukrainian regions. *—PTI*

Uruguay is 1st Latin American nation to allow euthanasia

MONTEVIDEO, 16 OCT

Uruguay's Senate has passed a historic law decriminalising euthanasia on Wednesday, making it the first Latin American country to legalise assisted dying through legislation. Colombia and Ecuador have decriminalised the practice through Supreme Court decisions. The bill, approved by 20 of 31 senators, allows terminally or severely ill patients experiencing "unbearable suffering" to seek medical assistance to end their lives. The law excludes minors and assisted suicide, cementing Uruguay's reputation as one of South America's most socially progressive nations. Opposition largely came from the Catholic Church, which urged Uruguayans to "defend the gift of life." *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Diane Keaton died of pneumonia, says family

LOS ANGELES, 16 OCT

Oscar-winning Hollywood actor Diane Keaton died of pneumonia, her family announced in the American news outlet People magazine, thanking fans for their outpouring of love and support. Keaton, who passed away on 11 October, was known for her memorable performances in 'Annie Hall', 'The Godfather' trilogy, 'Manhattan', 'Something's Gotta Give' and 'Reds'. The family urged fans to honour her by donating to food banks or animal shelters, reflecting her lifelong compassion for the unhoused and animals. Keaton's decades-long career and unique charm made her one of Hollywood's most enduring stars. She won the Academy Award for Best Actress for her role in 'Annie Hall' (1977) and earned multiple Oscar nominations across her career. *—PTI*

The bodies of deceased Palestinians, held by Israel during the war, lie in plastic bags on the floor of Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza *PHOTO: PTI*

Body swaps threatens fragile Gaza truce

Hamas, Israel trade blame on deal violation

JERUSALEM, 16 OCT

Israel received the remains of two more hostages on Wednesday, hours after the Israeli military said that one of the bodies previously turned over was not that of a hostage. The confusion added to tensions over the fragile truce, as Israel and Hamas traded accusation about violating the ceasefire.

At least three people were killed in Gaza on Thursday, with both sides claiming the other violated the ceasefire.

The remains were transferred by the Red Cross from Hamas. After the two coffins arrived in Israel, the military in a statement cautioned that the hostages' identities had yet to be verified.

Under a ceasefire agreement, Hamas returned the last 20 surviving hostages to Israel but has handed back only nine of 28 deceased captives, saying it would need specialist recovery equipment to retrieve the rest from the ruins.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump said that Israel could resume the war if he feels Hamas is not upholding its end of the agreement.

"Israel will return to those streets as soon as I say the word," Trump said.

PALESTINIAN PRISONERS ABUSED?

The Gaza Health Ministry said it received 45 more bodies of Palestinians from Israel, another step in implementation of the ceasefire agreement. That brought to 90 the total number of bodies returned to Gaza for burial.

The forensics team examining the remains said they showed signs of mistreatment.

Israel is expected to turn over more bodies, though officials have not said how many are in its custody or how many will be returned. Many appeared decomposed or burned. Some were missing limbs or teeth, while others were coated in sand and dust.

Sameh Hamad, a member of a commission tasked with receiving the bodies at Khan Younis' Nasser Hospital, said some arrived with their hands and legs cuffed.

"There are signs of torture and executions," he said. *—PTI with agencies*

Afghan fighting India's war: Pak

SLAMABAD, 16 OCT

Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif accused Afghanistan's Taliban government of "fighting a proxy war" for India. Asif accused India of "sponsoring" the Taliban's moves, as Islamabad and Kabul have had a series of deadly clashes recently.

In an interview with Geo News, Asif expressed scepticism over the chances of Wednesday's 48-hour ceasefire holding.

"I have my doubts that the ceasefire will hold, because the (Afghan) Taliban are being sponsored by Delhi," Asif said. "Right now, Kabul is fighting a proxy war for Delhi."

He noted how the timing of the week-long clashes coincided with Taliban's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi visit to India.

Asif said that Afghans "have always been loyal to India and against Pakistan in the past and present, and they would continue to remain the same in the future as well."

'TRUMP CAN INTERVENE'

"I think Presidents in America have been responsible for wars. This is the first President (Donal Trump) who has stopped wars," Asif said. "If he wants to look into the Pakistan-Afghanistan war, he is most welcome." *—Salar News*

34 TTP terrorists killed in Pakistan

Thirty-four terrorists of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) were killed by security forces in multiple intelligence-based operations in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the military said on Thursday. Pakistan has seen a surge in militant attacks, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces, after the banned TTP called off its ceasefire with the government in November 2022.

Oppn urges Yunus to maintain good relations with Army

DHAKA/NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader Salahuddin Ahmed on Wednesday urged interim government chief Muhammad Yunus to maintain good relations with the army amid controversy over military officers' trials in a civil tribunal.

Ahmed told Yunus, "The state must remain in a balanced position... we don't want to draw any risk," stressing BNP support is conditional and not limitless. The warning comes ahead of February's general election.

Earlier, Yunus convened an emergency meeting after disagreements over the July Charter, a government-drafted reform declaration.

Ahmed cautioned that fallen autocrats and allies could exploit discord between the army and interim government.

Parties including Jamaat-e-Islami, NCP, and CPB joined discussions with Yunus's National Consensus Commission. *—PTI*

China warns US against sanctions over Russia

BEIJING, 16 OCT

China on Thursday defended its oil imports from Russia as legitimate and lawful, warning the US that it would take "firm countermeasures" if it imposed unilateral sanctions affecting Beijing's interests.

The US' approach amounted to unilateral bullying and economic coercion, which severely undermines international trade rules and threatens the security and stability of global industrial and supply chains, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said.

China's normal trade and energy cooperation with countries around the world, including Russia, is legitimate and lawful, Lin said, responding to a question on US President Donald Trump's claim that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assured him of not buying oil from Russia, and it was now time for China to do the same.

"If China's legitimate rights and interests are harmed, we will take firm countermeasures to safeguard our sovereignty, development," he said. *—PTI*

CIA is active in Venezuela: Trump

WASHINGTON, 16 OCT

US President Donald Trump said that he authorised the CIA to conduct covert operations inside Venezuela. He said he was weighing carrying out land operations on the country.

The acknowledgement comes after the US military in recent weeks carried out a series of deadly strikes against alleged drug-smuggling boats in the Caribbean Sea. US forces have destroyed at least five boats since early September, 27 killing at least people. The Trump administration has yet to provide evidence that the were carrying narcotics.

"I authorised (the CIA) for two reasons," Trump said. "No. 1, they have emptied their prisons into the US. And the other thing, the drugs, we have a lot of drugs coming in from Venezuela."

Trump said the traditional approach has not worked.

US President Donald Trump hosted a dinner for nearly 130 donors who funded the renovation of White House's ballroom. Trump fed them an assortment of fast food *PHOTO: WHITE HOUSE*

"We have been doing that for 30 years, and it has been totally ineffective. They have faster boats," he said. "They are world-class speedboats, but they are not faster than missiles."

Trump added the administration "is looking at land" as it considers further strikes in the region. He declined to say whether the CIA will take action against President Nicolás Maduro, who appealed for peace. *—PTI*

US may double Argentina aid to $40B

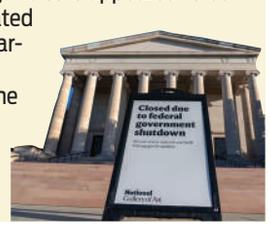
The Trump administration is looking to provide an additional $20 billion in financing for Argentina through a mix of financing from sovereign funds and the private sector, above the $20 billion credit swap line that the US Treasury pledged to Argentine President Javier Milei and his government this month.

Scribes forgo WH access over new reporting rules

Dozens of reporters turned in access badges and exited the Pentagon on Wednesday rather than agree to government-imposed restrictions on their work. News outlets were nearly unanimous in rejecting Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth's rules that said journalist can't report on information not been approved by Hegseth.

Don barred from firings during govt shutdown

A US federal judge on Wednesday temporarily blocked the Trump administration from firing workers during the government shutdown, saying the cuts appeared to be politically motivated and were being carried out without much thought. The government has issued 4,100 layoff notices.



AFTER BEING REAPPOINTED

French PM survives 'no-confidence' vote

PARIS, 16 OCT

French Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu survived a no-confidence vote on Thursday, averting a crisis that could have toppled his fragile government. The National Assembly's decision clears the way for Lecornu to tackle the next major challenge, and that is passing the 2026 budget through the bitterly divided lower house before year-end.

Two motions targeted him, from the hard-left France Unbowed party and far-right National Rally led by Marine Le Pen. The France Unbowed motion failed with 271 votes in favor; 289 were needed. Le Pen's motion is seen as even less likely to pass.

Lecornu lured some opposition support by proposing a temporary suspension of Macron's controversial pension reform, raising the retirement age from 62 to 64.

He also pledged not to use special constitutional powers to push the budget without approval.

Despite surviving, Lecornu faces tough negotiations on tax hikes, spending cuts, and deficit reduction in a deeply divided Parliament. *—PTI*

COSTA RICA TIGHTENS ABORTION RULES

SAN JOSE, 16 OCT

Costa Rica's President Rodrigo Chaves on Wednesday further restricted abortion, allowing it only when the mother's life is at risk. Previously, abortions were permitted if a pregnancy threatened the mother's health. No legislative approval was needed for the Health Ministry rule change.

Chaves, fulfilling a promise to religious conservatives at the Evangelical Alliance, said, "Today the only reason for which an abortion can be done without penalty is when there are only two options: the mother's life or the life of the being that is inside." Critics saw political motives ahead of next year's elections. Costa Rica previously had allowed abortions under narrow exceptions. *—PTI*

USES N-WORD, PRAISES HITLER

Young Republican leaked chats filled with racism, misogyny

WASHINGTON, 16 OCT

Leaked chats show a group called Young Republicans engage hundreds of racist, misogynistic and generally inappropriate texts, ranging from "I love Hitler," and suggesting that their opponents should be thrown in a gas chamber, to referring to black people as monkeys and joking about raping their enemies.

In the 2,900-page leaked Telegram chat published by Politico, GOP leaders from different chapters of the organisation, including William Hendrix and Peter Giunta, openly use the N-word (n****r) and other such racist slurs.

Politico reported that "spoke freely" about, among other things, "the love of Nazis within their party's right wing."

Vice President JD Vance, however, came to their defence, saying on X that "I refuse to join the pearl clutching when powerful people call for political violence".

Vance was referring to a leaked chats of Jay Jones, the Virginia Democratic nominee who had said "only when people personally feel pain do they move on policy" in a leaked message, interpreted as a call to violence.

"This is far worse than anything said in a college group chat, and the guy who said it could become the AG of Virginia," Vance wrote.

Meanwhile, Giunta, chief of staff to New York state Assembly called the Young Republican leaks a "coordinated year-long character assassination". Guinta had joked about the gas chamber.

"I am so sorry to those offended by the insensitive and inexcusable language found within.... a private group chat that I created during my campaign to lead the Young Republicans," he said in a statement.

The board of directors of Young Republicans said in a statement that "those involved must immediately resign." *—Salar News*

POLITICO
Everyone that votes no is going to the gas chamber.
Also ... we are officially under consideration for a Trump endorsement.
Great. I love Hitler
you're giving nationals to much credit and expecting the Jew to be honest
Stay in the closet f----t
I'm ready to watch people burn now
If we ever had a leak of this chat we would be cooked fr fr
I'd go to the zoo if I wanted to watch monkey play ball
When do we start bullying dude?
Kick the b---h
It was rape
Boom - they're dead.
And everyone that endorsed but then votes for us is going to the gas chamber.
They love the watermelon people
This girl is fully r------d
Yooooooo

- In the 2,900-page leaked Telegram chat of the Young Republican published by Politico, GOP leaders, including William Hendrix and Peter Giunta, openly use the N-word (n****r) and other such racist slurs. Vice President JD Vance, however, defended the chat

Rupee jumps by 12P, closes at 87.96 against USD

MUMBAI, 16 OCT

Rising for the second straight session, the rupee surged 12 paise to close at 87.96 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, buoyed by a softer American currency against major currencies and renewed risk-on sentiment among investors. Forex traders said that likely intervention by the Reserve Bank of India and a firm trend in domestic equities further enthused investors. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened below the 88-mark at 87.76 against the greenback, and touched an intraday high of 87.68.On Wednesday, the rupee bounced back sharply by 73 paise to close at 88.08 against US dollar, posting its biggest intraday gain in nearly four months. Spot USD/INR exhibits support at 87.60 and resistance at 88.70. *—PTI*

AI adds 174 weekly flights to boost connectivity

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Air India has announced the addition of 174 weekly flights on key domestic and short-haul international routes beginning on 26 October as part of its "Northern Winter Schedule". This expansion aims to strengthen connectivity between key Indian cities and popular destinations in Southeast Asia. Flights between Delhi and Kuala Lumpur will increase from seven to ten weekly from 15 November, and Delhi–Denpasar (Bali) from 1 December. Domestically, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat will see increased frequencies, including new Delhi–Jaipur and Delhi–Jaisalmer services. The airline stated that the move aligns with its upgraded A320neo aircraft, launched in September and now features refreshed cabin interiors across Business, Premium Economy, and Economy classes, thereby enhancing travel experience and connectivity. *—PTI*

India's tea exports rise by 2.2% in 2025

KOLKATA, 16 OCT

Tea Board data showed India's tea exports rose 2.2 per cent to 174.42 million kilogrammes between January and August 2025, up from 170.63 million kilogrammes in the same period last year. Exports from North India climbed to 113.14 million kilogrammes from 99.14 million, while South India saw a decline to 61.28 million from 71.49 million. The average export price rose to Rs 294.90 per kg, compared to Rs 261.50 a year earlier. The total export value increased to Rs 5,143.56 crore from Rs 4,461.95 crore, reflecting higher realisations. In the financial year 2024-25, tea exports stood at 257.88 million kilogrammes, higher than 250.73 million kilogrammes in the previous fiscal year from April to March. *—PTI*

Canara Robeco shares climb nearly 13% in mkt debut

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Shares of Canara Robeco Asset Management Company on Thursday ended nearly 13 per cent higher in its debut trade against the issue price of RS 266. The stock made its market debut at Rs 280.25, up 5.35 per cent from the issue price on the BSE and NSE. On the BSE, share of the firm ended at Rs 300.25, up 12.87 per cent. At the NSE, shares of the firm ended at Rs 300.45, up 12.95 per cent. The company's market valuation stood at Rs 5,987.51 crore. Additionally, mattress maker Duroflex has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise funds through an IPO comprising a fresh issue of shares worth Rs 183.6 crore. The filing comes at a time when the primary market is experiencing strong interest from both issuers and investors across various sectors. *—PTI*

India prepares to cut Russian crude imports

Crude prices rise by 0.51% to ₹5,159/barrel

NOIDA/MUMBAI/ NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Amid the increasing pressure from the United States, some of the Indian refineries are planning to cut down on the Russian Crude imports, said news agency Reuters on Thursday.

According to sources, this follows after the US asked New Delhi not to import Russian oil to put an end to the Russia-Ukraine war.

However, the Indian companies have stated that they have not received an official order from their government asking them to stop purchasing Russian oil, the report stated.

The refineries stated that the immediate stopping of Russian oil purchases will induce a rise in global oil prices and threaten inflation, sources said.

According to Reuters, India and China are the two top purchasers of Russian oil, taking advantage of the EU sanctions on Moscow after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

From April to September, 2025, India has imported nearly 1.75 million barrels per day of Russian oil, accounting for 36 per cent of total imports, lower than previous years' imports during the same period of 40 per cent, the report said.

Meanwhile, imports from US went up 6.8% year-on-year to 2,13,000 barrels per day, it said. According to a government data, the Middle Eastern oil rose from 42 per cent to 45 per cent during the same period.

Additionally, Crude oil prices on Thursday rose by 0.51 per cent at Rs 26 to Rs 5,159 per barrel in futures trade as participants increased their positions following a firm spot demand. *—Agencies*

Indian exports to US down by 37.5% amid tariff threat

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Indian exports to the United States have plunged by 37.5 per cent over four months following Washington's decision to impose 50 per cent tariffs on most Indian goods, according to a report by the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).

The report shows shipments fell from USD 8.8 billion in May 2025 to USD 5.5 billion in September 2025, marking the sharpest and most sustained decline of the year.

September, the first full month under the new tariff regime, saw a 20.3 per cent fall in exports alone.

The cumulative loss in monthly export value between May and September has exceeded USD 3.3 billion, underscoring the severe impact on bilateral trade.

Sectors hit hardest include textiles, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, and chemicals, raising concerns about India's long-term competitiveness in its largest export market. GTRI has urged a policy review to safeguard India's trade interests *—ANI*

India seeks trade deals with US, EU and Oman, says Goyal

India is currently engaged in active discussions for free trade agreements (FTAs) with several nations, including US, EU, Oman, and others, as noted by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal. "We have done free trade agreements with many developed countries in the last three years...We are in active dialogue with the US, EU, Chile, Peru, New Zealand, and Oman," he said. India has previously established FTAs with Australia, the UAE, and the EFTA bloc, and has signed deals with UK and Brazil, aiming to enhance trade ties. However, ongoing tensions have emerged from previous tariffs imposed by US, leading to a decrease in Indian exports to the nation. *—PTI*

NIFTY SURGES BY 261.75 PTS

Sensex sees 4-month high with 862 points jump

MUMBAI, 16 OCT

Benchmark BSE Sensex jumped by 862.23 points while Nifty closed near the 25,600 mark on Thursday, following across-the-board buying by investors triggered by a global stocks rally and US Fed rate cut hopes.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 862.23 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 83,467.66 with 28 of its constituents ending higher and two with losses. During the day, it zoomed 1,010.05 points or 1.22 per cent to 83,615.48.

The 50-share NSE Nifty surged 261.75 points or 1.03 per cent to 25,585.30.

Among Sensex firms, Kotak Mahindra Bank rose the most by 2.67 per cent. Titan, Axis Bank, Adani Ports, Mahindra & Mahindra, Reliance Industries, Tata Motors and HDFC Bank were among the major gainers.

However, Eternal and Infosys were the laggards.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.47 per cent and midcap index went up by 0.29 per cent. As many as 2,377 stocks advanced while 1,810 declined and 147 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi jumped 2.49 per cent, Japan's Nikkei 225 index climbed 1.27 per cent, and Shanghai's SSE Composite index went up by 0.10 per cent. Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended lower.

Markets in Europe were trading higher. US markets ended mostly higher on Wednesday *—PTI*

Ahead of Deepavali: Gold prices surge by '200 to '1.31L/10g

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Gold prices retreated from their record levels on Thursday, declining by Rs 200 to Rs 1,31,600 per 10g in the national capital amid profit booking by traders, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had climbed by Rs 1,000 to hit a lifeitme high of Rs 1,31,800 per 10g in the previous trade.

In the local bullion market, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also dipped by Rs 200 to Rs 1,31,000 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). The yellow metal had previously finished at Rs 1,31,200 per 10g, its all-time high level.

However, silver prices rebounded by surging Rs 2,000 to trade near their record high at Rs 1,84,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) in a volatile session. The white metal had touched a record of Rs 1,85,000 per kg on Tuesday.

Spot gold rose nearly 1 per cent to hit an all-time high of USD 4,246.08 per ounce. Spot silver was marginally up at USD 53.05 per ounce. *—PTI*

Infosys Q2 profit up 13%, Wipro's rises 1.7%

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

IT company Infosys on Thursday posted 13.2 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 7,364 crore for the second quarter ended 30 September, 2025.

The company had logged a net profit of Rs 6,506 crore in the same period a year ago.

Revenue from operations grew 8.6 per cent to Rs 44,490 crore during the quarter from Rs 40,986 crore a year ago.

The company increased the lower base of the growth outlook for fiscal year 2026 to 2-3 per cent in constant currency terms from 1-3 per cent it had projected in the June 2025 quarter. It posted a marginal decline in operating margin to 21 per cent both on year-over-year and quarterly basis.

The free cash flow generation was at 131 per cent of net profit at Rs 9,677 crore and TCV of large deal wins was about Rs 27,525 crore.

The company increased the employee headcount during the quarter by 8,203 to 3,31,991 from 3,23,788 reported in June 2025 quarter.

WIPRO UP TO RS 3,246 CR

IT services firm Wipro on Thursday reported a marginal increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 3,246.2 crore in the July-September quarter.

The firm had reported a profit of Rs 3,208.8 crore in the year-ago period, according to a regulatory filing. Revenue from operations for the quarter under review rose by 1.7 per cent to Rs 22,697.3 crore compared to the same period of the last year.

Sequentially, profit fell by 2.5 per cent while revenue rose 2.5 per cent. *—PTI*

Eternal reports ₹65 cr net profit for Q2

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Food delivery and quick commerce company Eternal, which owns the Zomato and Blinkit brands, announced a consolidated net profit of Rs 65 crore for the second quarter ending in September. This marks a significant decrease from the net profit of Rs 176 crore reported during the same period last fiscal year.

In a regulatory filing, the company, which rebranded itself as Eternal in March, noted that the results are not directly comparable to the previous year due to its acquisition of Orbgen Technologies Pvt Ltd and Wasteland Entertainment Pvt Ltd, which handle the 'movie ticketing' and 'events' businesses, respectively. This acquisition was finalised in August 2024.

Eternal's revenue from operations surged to Rs 13,590 crore for the quarter, up from Rs 4,799 crore the previous year, while total expenses reached Rs 13,813 crore, compared to Rs 4,783 crore recorded last year. The company's reporting segments include food ordering, quick commerce, and Hyperpure supplies, among others. *—PTI*

Nestlé India Q2 profit falls by 17.4%

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Nestlé India Ltd's consolidated net profit fell 17.37 per cent to Rs 743.17 crore for the September 2025 quarter, down from Rs 899.5 crore a year earlier, even as revenue climbed 11 per cent to a record Rs 5,630.23 crore. Domestic sales rose 10.8 per cent to Rs 5,411.02 crore, driven by strong volume growth in Maggi, Kit Kat, Munch, Milkybar, and Purina. Exports surged 14.4 per cent to Rs 219.21 crore. Total expenses rose 12.9 per cent to Rs 4,616.73 crore. Shares gained 3.86 per cent to Rs 1,268.70 on the BSE.

NESTLÉ TO CUT 16K JOBS UNDER NEW CEO

Globally, Nestlé SA plans to cut 16,000 jobs around 6 per cent of its workforce over the next two years under new CEO Philipp Navratil.

The layoffs, which include 12,000 white-collar and 4,000 production and supply chain roles, aim to save 1 billion Swiss francs and accelerate the company's turnaround. *—PTI*

Zee Q2 profit down 63% due to ads fund pullback

Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL), which operates channels including ZeeTV and ZeeCinema, reported a 63.46 per cent decline in consolidated net profit of Rs 76.5 crore for the quarter ending September 2025, amid the continuous pullback of advertising expenses. Advertising revenue, dropped by 10.58 per cent to Rs 806.3 crore, marking 12th decline in 13 quarters, as companies scaled back spending amid slowing consumer demand. Total income fell 1.9 per cent to Rs 1,995.6 crore. Expenses up 6.9 per cent to Rs 1,880.3 crore. *—PTI*

Ola powers into battery storage mkt

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Ola Electric on Thursday said it has entered India's rapidly expanding Rs 1 lakh crore battery energy storage systems (BESS) market with the launch of its first residential solution, Ola Shakti.

The market is projected to exceed Rs 3 lakh crore by 2030.

Chairman and Managing Director Bhavish Aggarwal said India's challenge lies not in energy shortage but in "energy storage opportunity".

Developed entirely in India, Ola Shakti uses the advanced 4680 Bharat Cell and automotive-grade battery packs.

Its modular design supports scalable installation, 98 per cent efficiency, zero maintenance cost, IP67-rated weatherproof safety with a voltage range of 120V-290V protecting appliances from voltage fluctuations, and outperforming traditional lead-acid inverters and diesel generators. *—PTI*

Foxconn, Nvidia partner for AI infra

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Taiwanese manufacturing giant Foxconn has announced a strategic partnership with US chip designer Nvidia to develop advanced AI factory infrastructure, the company revealed at the OCP Global Summit 2025 in San Jose, California.

Under the collaboration, Foxconn will implement Nvidia's 800 VDC data centre power architecture at its K-1 AI data centre project in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. The architecture is specifically designed for high-density AI workloads, featuring a modular and scalable setup that reduces current and resistive losses, simplifies power distribution, and improves energy conversion efficiency and overall system safety. *—PTI*

IN INDIA & 5 OTHER COUNTRIES

Deepika Padukone becomes Meta AI's new voice

MUMBAI, 16 OCT

Bollywood actress **Deepika Padukone** collaborated with Meta to become the new voice of its AI version across multiple countries.

Taking to her Instagram handle, Padukone shared a video which featured the actress recording her voice in a studio for Meta AI.

"Hi, I am Deepika Padukone. I am the new voice of Meta AI. So tap the ring and my voice will run out," said Deepika in the post.

While sharing the video, the 'Piku' actress wrote, "Okay, so this is pretty cool I think! I'm now part of Meta AI and you can chat with my voice in English across India, United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand."

Recently, Padukone, who is also a founder of The Live Love Laugh (LLL) Foundation, has been appointed as the first-ever Mental Health Ambassador by the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW).

The announcement was made on the occasion of World Mental Health Day, marking a significant step in India's ongoing efforts to prioritise mental well-being as a key component of public health.

Expressing gratitude to the government for entrusting her with this significant role in advocating for mental health awareness, Deepika took to Instagram and wrote, "On World Mental Health Day, I am deeply honoured to be appointed as the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare's first-ever Mental Health Ambassador."

She also emphasised how, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has taken "meaningful steps to place mental health at the heart of public health." *—PTI*

Global partners to invest $1.5B in Oracle's AI platform

LAS VEGAS, 16 OCT

Leading global system integrators and technology partners have pledged a collective investment exceeding USD 1.5 billion in Oracle's new AI Data Platform, marking one of the company's largest partner-driven initiatives to date.

Announced at Oracle AI World 2025, the investment will fund training for over 8,000 professionals and the development of more than 100 industry-specific AI use cases, spanning sectors such as finance, healthcare, manufacturing, and retail.

Executive Vice President TK Anand said Oracle has worked closely with partners including Infosys, LTIMindtree, Cognizant, Accenture, and KPMG to ensure readiness for the platform's global rollout.

Among the largest commitments, LTIMindtree will invest over USD 200 million, while KPMG has pledged a USD 200 million programme over the next five years, including training 1,600 staff worldwide. Infosys identified the platform as a top strategic priority, planning further investment in generative AI use cases under its Topaz AI-first framework. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Abhishek, Smriti named ICC Players of the Month

DUBAI, 16 OCT

Star India openers Abhishek Sharma and Smriti Mandhana on Thursday won the ICC Player of the Month awards for September following their superlative performance in the Asia Cup and women's ODI series against Australia, respectively. Abhishek accumulated 314 runs in seven matches during the period at an average of 44.85 and an outstanding strike-rate of 200. The 25-year-old, who was adjudged the player of the tournament in the Asia Cup, also achieved the highest rating points ever in the T20I batting rankings. He won ahead of team-mate Kuldeep Yadav and Zimbabwe's Brian Bennett. "It feels great to win this ICC award, and I am happy that it has come for some important matches that I could help win.—*PTI*

British Basketball Federation suspended by FIBA

LONDON, 16 OCT

The British Basketball Federation has been suspended by the sport's world governing body and its men's team barred from international competition because of governance issues, FIBA announced on Wednesday. A task force was set up in August by the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) to investigate "regulatory non-compliance" within British basketball after a power struggle between the BBF and Super League Basketball. The BBF awarded a 15-year licence to run a new professional men's competitionthe Great Britain Basketball Leagueto GBB League Ltd (GBBL) in April, a consortium led by the American businessman Marshall Glickman.—*PTI*

Tanvi Sharma one win away from securing medal

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Tanvi Sharma made a backhand return and stepped forward, only to watch China's Sun Li Yuan lift the shuttle and send it past the Indian towards the end of the second game. It was the only moment where the home favorite was caught off-guard in an otherwise clinical 15-8, 15-5 victory in the round of 16 of the BWF World Junior Championships in Guwahati on Thursday. Tanvi's result meant India can secure five medals on Friday. Unnati and Tankara Talasila in singles.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@TITMUS

Ariarne Titmus, Olympic gold medallist retires

BRISBANE, 16 OCT

The Olympic champion known affectionately as "Arnie" chose to terminate her elite swimming career immediately, an ending that caught her audience completely by surprise. Ariarne Titmus, a four-time Olympic gold medalist, had been widely expected to return to competitive swimming following a break in the wake of the Paris Games and train for the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028. Instead, she posted a video on Instagram on Thursday announcing her retirement at the age of 25. "I've always loved swimming, it's been my passion since I was a little girl, but I guess I've taken this time away from the sport and realized some things in my life that have always been important to me are just a little bit more important to me now than swimming," Titmus said. "And that's OK."—*PTI*

Indian players should be allowed in foreign leagues: Shastri

SYDNEY, 16 OCT

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri feels more Indian players should be allowed to participate in foreign leagues, saying that playing alongside international stars overseas would give youngsters "terrific" exposure and broaden their cricketing horizons.

At present, the BCCI bars active Indian players from featuring in overseas T20 leagues. Indian cricketers can only play abroad after retiring from all forms of domestic and international cricket and securing a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the board.

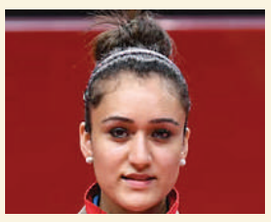
Seasoned off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin recently became the first high-profile Indian cricketer to join the BBL, signing with Sydney Thunder for the upcoming season. "India is a massive country, not everyone gets an opportunity to play, not everyone can make it. So why stop a guy (from playing in Big Bash League) if he can't make it to the Test side, get a level C or level D contract?" Shastri said on the Willow Talk podcast.

"That exposure will help him when he comes back, like the IPL has helped so many young players as they rub shoulders with top-class players," he added.

The 63-year-old, who coached India from 2017 and 2021, feels that besides sharing the dressing room with an array of international cricketers, the players will also learn a lot from the games' legends, who may be a part of the coaching staff.

"They learn to handle pressure. Additionally, they get to rub shoulders with big international stars like Ricky. Ponting and (Stephen) Fleming and international players," he added.

"It's an education - and for me, there's no better education than going overseas. That exposure is terrific, not just in cricketing terms but in understanding different cultures and methods. You learn so many things - a West Indian training method will be different from an Australian one," he added. —*PTI*



Visa delay for Manika Batra before WTT Star Contender event

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Star India table tennis player Manika Batra on Thursday said that she and her three teammates are yet to get any update on their UK visa application to participate in the WTT Star Contender tournament in London starting 20 October.

Batra, a medallist at the 2018 Commonwealth Games and 2023 Asian Games, said she had applied for her visa after the China Smash (September 25 to October 5) tournament in Beijing, but has yet to get the clearance.

Me and my teammates @sathiyantt, @Harmeetdesai, and @Diyachitalett & support staff applied for our UK visas immediately after our China tournament to play in London at the WTT Star Contender London 2025. —*PTI*

Harvik, Chirag lead Saurashtra, Karnataka bowl out for 372

K'taka's overnight batters, R Smaran and Shreyas, fall in quick succession

RAJKOT, 16 OCT

On a sweltering day, Saurashtra openers Harvik Desai (41, 104b, 2x4, 1x6) and Chirag Jani (90, 148b, 11x4, 1x6) turned the heat on Karnataka with a 140-run partnership that lit up the afternoon on day two of their Ranji Trophy Group B clash at the Niranjan Shah Stadium on Thursday.

The duo, displaying a blend of grit and elegant stroke play, wrested control of the game with a batting display that screamed intent.

After the visitor was bowled out for 372 in its first innings, Harvik and Chirag began the home side's response positively, taking full advantage of the benign surface and humid conditions, which offered little assistance to the bowlers. The pair effortlessly found the fence and settled into a good rhythm.

Chirag, the more aggressive of the two, showcased an impressive range of strokes fluent drives off both front and back foot, and sharp square cuts keeping the scoreboard ticking and sustaining the pressure on the bowlers.

Chiraj Jani struck 91 runs
PHOTO: PTI

However, Karnataka clawed its way back with four quick wickets, courtesy of its spinners. Offie Mohsin Khan provided the much-needed breakthrough, trapping Harvik plumb in front. Shreyas Gopal then took charge, dismissing the well-set Chirag, and later sending back Jay Gohel (substitute for Tarang Gohel, who was ruled out after injuring his fingers) and Ansh Gosai, who was caught at forward short-leg. The home side was at 200 for four when stumps were drawn. Karnataka's overnight batters R. Smaran and Shreyas, in pursuit of quick runs, fell in quick succession.

RANJI TROPHY

Dharmendrasinh Jadeja has his 25th five-wicket haul in first-class cricket, Maharashtra pacer Rajneesh Gurbani prevented Rohan Kunnummal from capitalising on his quick start
PHOTO: PTI

Maharashtra's Gurbani, Saxena rattle Kerala top order on rain-affected Day 2

An old scourge and an ex-teammate returned to torment Kerala on a rain-hit second day of the Ranji Trophy Group B match against Maharashtra at the Sports Hub, Greenfield Stadium on Thursday.

Rajneesh Gurbani, who blew away Kerala eight years ago in a Ranji Trophy quarterfinal match in Surat, took two quick wickets to put Kerala on the back foot after a fine Maharashtra lower-order resistance in the extended post-lunch session.

Jalaj Saxena, in the first over after tea, took the wicket of opener Rohan Kunnummal (27) to leave Kerala in a spot of bother at 35 for three when rain forced play to be called off four balls later.

Only 35.5 overs of play were possible on the day that saw pre-match showers wipe out the entire first session. Maharashtra's overnight batters Vicky Ostwal and Ramakrishna Ghosh negotiated the Kerala attack without any fuss. The lengths that the Kerala medium pacers bowled were a trifle short to trouble the batters.

Karnataka 372 in 117.3 overs (Devdutt Padikkal 96, Karun Nair 73, R. Smaran 77, Shreyas Gopal 56, Shikhar Shetty 41, Dharmendrasinh Jadeja 7/124) vs Saurashtra 200/4 in 60 overs (Harvik Desai 41, Chirag Jani 90, Shreyas Gopal 3/51). —*PTI*

Team India arrives in Perth for ODI series against Australia

Virat Kohli, Shubham Gill, Rohit Sharma, and Shreyas Iyer
PHOTO: PTI

PERTH, 16 OCT

Prominent members of the Indian ODI team, including star batters Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, arrived here early on Thursday for a three-match series against Australia starting on 19 October.

Senior stars Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma hit the ground running soon after their arrival here and spent a considerable time in the nets during the Indian team's first training session ahead of the ODI series against Australia beginning here on Sunday.

The one-dayers have generated a buzz, as they are Rohit and Kohli's first international outing after India's Champions Trophy triumph in March. The future of the two stalwarts has become a subject of intense speculation, especially after Gill's elevation to ODI captaincy.

THE ODI WILL BEGIN HERE ON SUNDAY

(23 October) and Sydney (25 October). It will be followed by a five-match T20 International series starting 29 October.

Both of them have already retired from Test and T20 Internationals, but are believed to be keen on continuing at least until the 2027 ODI World Cup.

Gill, who also leads the Test side, has been supportive of the idea in his media interactions since taking over the ODI reins.

It will be challenging for Rohit and Kohli: Watson

Former Australia all-rounder Shane Watson reckons it would be challenging for Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma to extend their exemplary run in ODI cricket now that they play only one format.

The modern game is dominated by T20S while India also plays a lot of Test cricket, leaving little room for the ODI format.

Having retired from T20S and Tests, Rohit and Kohli's first assignment since the Champions Trophy in February-March will be the upcoming Australia series. —*PTI*

ALYSSA HEALY
PHOTO: PTI

Australia crushes B'desh by 10 wickets in women's WC

VISAKHAPATNAM, 16 OCT

Captain Alyssa Healy struck a magnificent unbeaten 113 to lead Australia to a crushing 10-wicket win over Bangladesh, virtually sealing his side's semifinal spot in the Women's World Cup here Thursday.

It was Healy's back-to-back hundred in the showpiece, having hit 142 in the previous match against India on October 12 here.Healy's unbeaten 113 came from just 77 balls, while her opening partner made Phoebe Litchfield, also remained not out on 84 as Australia chased down the target of 199 with 151 balls to spare.

Brief Scores.Bangladesh: 198 for 9 in 50 overs (Sobhana Mostary 66 not out, Rubya Haider 44; Georgia Wareham 2/22, Alana King 2/18). Australia: 202 for no loss in 24.5 overs (Alyssa Healy 113 not out, Phoebe Litchfield 84 not out). —*PTI*

WOMEN'S ODI WORLD CUP

Weather in focus as Sri Lanka meets steely South Africa

COLOMBO, 16 OCT

South Africa vs Sri Lanka
Match starts at
3.00 pm IST

Sri Lanka and South Africa would hope the wet spell in Colombo clears out as they face each other in a crucial Women's ODI World Cup contest here on Friday.

The last two games at the R Premadasa Stadium have been washed out, and there is a forecast of rain and thunderstorms on Friday as well.

If the game does happen, Sri Lanka would like to keep their semifinal hopes alive by getting their first win of the tournament. They have collected a point each from the two rainout games they were involved in and sit in the penultimate spot on the points table after four outings.

They put in a solid batting performance against New Zealand here on Wednesday that included a half-century by skipper Chamari Athapaththu and the fastest fifty of the ongoing edition by Nilakshika Silva before the weather played spoilsport.

Sri Lanka would need to build on that effort against South Africa, a unit that closed out two close games against India and Bangladesh.

Following the 10-wicket drubbing to England in their tournament opener, South Africa have turned it around in dramatic fashion by nailing the chase against New Zealand, hosts India, and subsequently Bangladesh.

In a spot of bother against India and Bangladesh, South Africa showed commendable fight and courage to get over the line. The standout player in both those chases was Nadine de Klerk, who displayed remarkable calm under extreme pressure to get the job done.

However, South Africa is not sitting on their success and is expecting runs from the top-order led by captain Laura Wolvaardt. —*PTI*

Yohannes scores stunner for Lyonnes in 3-0 win

NEW YORK, 16 OCT

US international Lily Yohannes capped the scoring in OL Lyon's 3-0 victory over St. Pölten with a spectacular long-range lob in the Women's Champions League.

Jule Brand and captain Ada Hegerberg, the competition's all-time leading scorer, also found the net for the record eight-time champions.

The 18-year-old Yohannes spotted goalkeeper Carina Schlüter off her line in the 52nd minute. From near the center circle, Yohannes powered a right-footed shot over Schlüter's head and into the net.

Lily
PHOTO: X/@YOHANNES

Brand opened the scoring just before the half-hour mark in France. The German completed a fluent team move by tapping in a cross from Vicki Becho.

Hegerberg headed in the second just seconds before halftime to improve her total tally to 67.

Lyon amassed 44 attempts on goal compared to six by the visitors from Austria.

Lyon coach Jonatan Giráldez used an entirely different starting 11 than the one that beat defending champion Arsenal 2-1 in the first round a week ago. —*PTI*

DP WORLD INDIA CHAMPIONSHIP

Shane grabs sole lead, McIlroy sits tied at 17th

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Shane Lowry's smile did not fade through the first round, and the Irishman had reason to be beaming after a bogey-free round that saw him finish with an 8-under 64 for the sole lead on the opening day of the DP World India Championship at the Delhi Golf Club on Thursday.

Lowry, one of the few overseas golfers in the fray who has actually played at the venue, albeit 15 years back, had eight birdies in his round to finish one shot ahead of Keita Nakajima. The Japanese also had eight birdies, including on the notorious par-4 ninth, the toughest hole by far on the course for the day, with 43 bogeys, 58 par scores, and just six birdies, but also dropped a shot on the sixth.

Shane Lowry
PHOTO: PTI

RORY MCILROY
PHOTO: PTI

South Africa's Casey Jarvis was on six-under 66 while India's Rahil Gangjee was in a three-way tie for the fourth position with Jorge Campillo and Jannik De Bruyn on 67. World No. 2 Rory McIlroy was further back at three-under 69 for tied 17th.

"Yeah, 64 is a really nice score. It's not that hard if you play out there, but if you miss the fairways, it can get really tricky. This type of course suits me, I needed to take advantage of it today and hopefully will continue to do it through the week," Lowry said after the round.

Rory, who also hit into the jungle off the fairway on the 16th, admitted to suffering a tough day. Gangjee, one of the oldest Indian pros, played a safe hand and had an uneventful round with four birdies and a bogey till the 17th hole. He was three over par and a long way back before sinking an eagle on the 18th to leapfrog to the top. He ended the day with 5-under. Among the other Indians, Anirban Lahiri was at 2-under 70 with a steady round, and Shubhankar scored a two-over-par 74. —*PTI*